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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

OPPORTUNISM IN POST-WAR GERMAN LITERATURE

by

Maureen Jones (C)

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to show the increased interest of German authors in the theme of opportunism following the Second World War as outlined in the introductory chapter. Five authors, Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Böll, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Günther Grass, and Martin Walser, examine opportunism in various works in order to illustrate the role of the opportunistic individual in an egocentric, faceless society, where many abdicate their responsibilities to themselves, and society with impunity.

The first chapter discusses the aim and purpose of this thesis, the reasons for the selection of these five authors, and the state of research related to this topic.

The second chapter examines the political opportunists. Here the distinction is made between those characters whose opportunistic behaviour was directly motivated by National Socialism and those characters whose behaviour was prompted by more general political circumstances.

The third chapter looks at those characters who were economic opportunists in that they sacrificed principle in order to have the prestige and safety associated with wealth.

Chapter Four deals with those characters whose opportunism crosses the fine boundary between politically and economically motivated behaviour. These characters share a complete lack of either economic or political values.

Finally, in the conclusion, the fundamental societal concerns, which bind all five authors and their respective works, are

analysed in relation to the increased instances of opportunism in Germany after the Second World War.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Gerwin Marahrens for his support, advice, and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis. As well, I would like to acknowledge the members of my committee.

At the same time, I would like to thank Clare McLeod, Helen Mower, and Pat Willms for their infinite patience and friendship over the past years. Finally, my sincere thanks go to my family, especially my husband and parents, for their thoughtfulness.

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I Introduction.

Opportunism does not adhere to geographical boundaries, nor is it peculiar to any particular race or ethnic group. It is one of the more unpleasant qualities found at any given time in mankind. The question arises, then, as to why the topic of opportunism appeared more and more frequently in German literature immediately following the Second World War. German-speaking authors, in their analyses of their society through literature after this catastrophic event develop opportunism into a recurring theme. The definition of the term "opportunism" which will be used in this thesis is as follows:

> Opportunism [f. Opportune, after It. opportunismo, F. opportunisme:(...).] The policy of doing what is opportune, or at the time expedient, in politics, as opposed to rigid adherence to party principles; often used to imply sacrifice of principle or an undue spirit of accommodation to present circumstances. A term first of Italian, and then of French politics, which in English use has been extended to characterize any method or course of action by which a party or person adapts himself to, and seeks to make profitable use of, the circumstances of the moment. (...).[1]

The focus of this thesis will be opportunism as it appears in a variety of German-language works following the Second World War.

This study will concentrate on five German speaking authors: Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Böll, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Günther Grass, and Martin Walser and specific opportunistic characters selected from their works. We will examine how these five writers responded to the economic and political conditions created by the

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[1] A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles; Founded Mainly of the Materials Collected by the Philological Society. VII 1, ed. James A.H. Murray, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 156.

war, the effects of which carried into the nineteen-fifties, sixties, and seventies, and how these authors dealt with the opportunistic types within their respective works.

The backdrop for the primary and secondary literature is the final years of the Third Reich in Germany and the early years of the young Federal Republic of Germany. It is the political and economic opportunism that was so rampant during these periods which has been isolated from the following selections of literature discussed in this thesis: Bertolt Brecht's Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg (1957); Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi (1952), Der Besuch der alten Dame (1956), Der Mitmacher (1976); Martin Walser's Halbzeit (1960); Heinrich Böll's Ansichten eines Clowns (1963); and Günther Grass' Die Blechtrommel (1959), and Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand (1966).

> Wenn der Krieg verlorengeht, wird auch das Volk verloren sein. Es ist nicht notwendig, auf die Grundlagen, die das deutsche Volk zu seinem primitivsten Weiterleben braucht, Rücksicht zu nehmen. Im Gegenteil ist es besser, selbst diese Dinge zu zerstören. Denn das Volk hat sich schwächer erwiesen, und dem stärkeren Ostvolk gehört ausschließlich die Zukunft. Was nach diesem Kampf übrigbleibt, sind ohnehin nur die Minderwertigen, denn die Gute sind gefallen.[2]

These words help show the absolute destruction and devastation that was intended to be visited upon the German nation and people as a direct result of Hitler and his National Socialist Party.

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[2]Hitler's comment to Albert Speer regarding the destruction of the power stations and industrial plants in the path of the Allied advance, one week before the German capitulation in May 1945. George Lichtheim, Kindlers Kulturgeschichte Europas, Band 20: Europa im 20. Jahrhundert (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983), pp. 450-51.

According to estimates, approximately four million German soldiers lost their lives in action, excluding the roughly one million soldiers who never returned from Russian P.O.W. camps.[3] The losses incurred for the civilian population were no less horrifying: Germany lost between six and seven million civilians.[4] Property damage was great. Unlike during the First World War, Germany had been a major battleground; the result was major damage to arable farmland and to cities.

A nation which had been so overwhelmed was ripe for the opportunism which breeds in chaos. The simple realization that one had indeed survived the war gave way to the "Trümmermentalität".[5] People had one main concern: to survive a period in their existence which many considered more tenuous than life during the war itself. At least in wartime the German people had not been dying of starvation as could happen now. People were suddenly living in the most primitive of conditions where disease could thrive.[6]

With the discovery of the concentration and extermination camps and their accompanying horrors, Germans were forced to realise what had been perpetrated in the name of the Fatherland.

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[3] Ibid. p. 444.

[4] Ibid. p. 445.

[5] Dieter Lattmann, hrsg. Kindlers Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart. Autoren. Werke. Themen. Tendenzen seit 1945. Die Literatur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, I, Aktualisierte Ausgabe, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1980), p. 5.

[6] Ibid.

Of course, since the infamous "Reichskristallnacht" of 1938, there was no longer doubt about the racist and violent tendencies of the National Socialists. Even so, Goebbel's massive propaganda campaigns along with a "Nichtwissenwollen" of many Nazi sycophants had kept these travesties from the public eye. The final outcome was an overwhelming collapse of the prevailing middle class values.[7]

Historians note how the petit-bourgeois class, especially, was baffled and bemused by this immediate post-war environment. While having kept itself uninformed about political events is unforgivable, such narrow-mindedness was common. Bewilderment became the prevalent feeling among the middle, and especially lower middle classes which had seen themselves as the supporting structure of the state.[8]

Furthermore, the amazingly rapid technical and economic reconstruction was a green pasture for the opportunist. The chances for personal advancement and gain were phenomenal in a very short time. The atomic and economic power of the United States was the protective umbrella for post-war reconstruction in western Europe[9]. The Marshall-Plan, first proposed on July 5, 1947, took the form of the European Recovery Programme. Of the eleven billion dollars which flowed in the major European nations, West Germany

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid. p. 7.

[9] Lichtheim, Kindlers Kulturgeschichte, p. 492.

received eleven per cent and had regained its pre-war standing by 1951.[10]

The massive destruction of factories and various industrial installations proved to be a paradoxical blessing for Germany since all technical reconstruction could be state of the art. Inflation in Germany was not nearly as bad as elsewhere. While in England price increases between 1950 and 1960 were 50%, the increase was only 20% in the Federal Republic of Germany. At the same time, however, industrial production in Germany more than doubled production in England and soon German workers' wages outstripped those of English workers.[11] Naturally, the new technology allowed for individual and political advance. The modern post-war airplane, electronics, and cybernetics industries allowed for more efficient factories and increased leisure time for individuals.[12]

Such rapid social and technological changes naturally left an imprint upon the population. Germany was now a divided nation and Berlin was a divided city. Both East and West were intent upon rebuilding the German state -- but according to their own specifications. As a result, the West confronted Stalinization by excluding Communists from influential positions and established Social, or Christian Democrat (or a coalition of both) governments.[13]

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[10] Ibid. pp. 497-98.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid. pp. 515-16.

[13] Lichtheim, Kindlers Kulturgeschichte, p. 471.

This, then, provides an overview of the economic and political climate of the Federal Republic of Germany immediately following the war and through into the 1960s. Germany was a nation that had been ideologically, politically, economically, and morally exhausted. Hitler's "New Order" had to make way for an even newer order which demanded the political, social, and economic adaptation at which the opportunist is so proficient. Indeed everyone was compelled to make adjustments whether it meant suppressing a NS past, coping with sudden post-war poverty, or attempting to re-create a valid system of values for oneself.

The traditional humanistic culture of the "Bürgertum," a culture which had its roots in the idealism in the age of Goethe, had proven to be too apolitical and not strong enough ethically to withstand the political ideology of National Socialism. The Western Allies hoped that the introduction of the Western parliamentary democratic system would provide a stronger and healthier base in German society. Together with the democratic system, the system of free enterprise was introduced.

Moreover, the developing confrontation between the Western democracies and Soviet Russia along with all the Marxist socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the Cold War led to an identification of capitalism with free democratic societies and, consequently, stifled any critical examination of the problematic morality of capitalism.

In capitalism people are exhorted to take advantage of economic opportunities and make profits. Thus there is a built-in

element of opportunistic thinking which is, of course, a constant temptation for persons lacking the necessary integrity to set aside social considerations and moral scruples and to become opportunists.

In 1949, the first government of the Federal Republic of Germany was formed. It was a conservative government consisting of a coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Free Deomocratic Party (FDP), the German Party (DP), and the Union of the People Expelled and Deprived of Rights ("Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten," BHE). During Adenauer's chancellorship, 1949-1963, the Federal Republic of Germany was developing into a free enterprise and consumer society in which political survival and individual security demanded and depended upon economic survival.[14]

Ultimately, then, as the "Economic Miracle" progressed, people wanted not only to survive, but to do well and succeed in a new nation of economic promise. Those who were most proficient at adapting would, in turn, become most successful. These were the political and economic opportunists. Such opportunists, as they occur in German literature from the end of the war, will be discussed and analyzed in this thesis. They will be examined according to how they interact in their society and how they promote themselves and their cause by conforming and adapting to Germany's competitive political and economic climate, even if it required disregarding common ethical principles and practices.

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[14]Lattmann, Kindlers Literaturgeschichte, p. 7.

The secondary literature which was used for this thesis concentrates primarily on the literary criticism of selected primary works. Opportunism as a theme was mentioned only in passing even in relation to Brecht's Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg and Dürrenmatt's Der Besuch der alten Dame, which describe the best known opportunists in post-war German literature. No secondary literature deals exclusively with opportunism as a motif in the works of various post-1945 German-speaking authors as was done in this study.

The most helpful critics were those who gave detailed and specific analyses of themes and character development in light of the political and economic climate in Germany which formed the time frame of any given primary work. Michael Schädlich,[15] Günther Wirth,[16] and Rainer Nägele[17] were most helpful in understanding Heinrich Böll's attitudes towards post-war German society and the opportunists in Ansichten eines Clowns.

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[15]Michael Schädlich, "Satire und Barmherzigkeit in Heinrich Bölls Roman Ansichten eines Clowns", In: Titelaufnahmen: Studien zu Werken von Thomas Mann, Heinrich Böll, Max Frisch, Graham Greene, Michail Bulgakow, Hermann Kant und Stefan Heym, (Berlin: Union-Presse Hass, 1978), pp. 57-72.

[16]Günther Wirth, "'Gefahr unter falschen Brüdern.'Anmerkungen zum Charakter und zur Entwicklung der politischen Positionen Heinrich Bölls," In: Weimarer Beiträge. Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft, Ästhetik und Kulturtheorie, 25 (1979), pp. 56-78.

[17]Rainer Nägele, "Heinrich Böll. Die große Ordnung und die kleine Anarchie," In: Gegenwartsliteratur und Drittes Reich: Deutsche Autoren in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit. hrsg. von Hans Wagener, 1. Auflage, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977) pp. 183-204.

Herbert Knust's comprehensive study on the Schweyk material[18] was the most valuable for the portion of this thesis devoted to Brecht. Similarly, Heike Doane[19] had the best secondary studies on Martin Walser's Halbzeit. As well, Hildegard Emmel,[20] Thomas Beckermann,[21] Ursula Reinhold,[22] and Rainer Nägele[23] all offered valuable insights into Walser's often confusing character developments.

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[18]Herbert Knust, Materialien zu Bertolt Brechts "Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg." Vorlagen (Bearbeitungen), Varianten, Fragmente, Skizzen, Brief- und Tagebuchnotizen. hrsg. [ediert und kommentiert] von Herbert Knust, edition suhrkamp 604, 1. Auflage, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974).

[19]Heike Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte in Martin Walsers Kristlein-Trilogie: "Halbzeit", "Das Einhorn", "Der Sturz", 1. Auflage, (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978).

----------, "Zur Intensivierung der politischen Thematik in Martin Walsers Kristlein-Trilogie", In: Weimarer Beiträge, 30 (1984) pp. 1842-1851.

[20]Hildegard Emmel,"Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild im Wechselspiel. Zu Martin Walsers Roman Halbzeit," In: Kritische Intelligenz als Methode. Alte und neue Aufsätze über sieben Jahrhunderte deutscher Literatur, hrsg. von Christiane Zehl Romero, (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1981). pp. 133-154.

[21]Thomas Beckermann, "Epilog auf eine Romanform. Martin Walsers Roman Halbzeit. Mit einer kurzen Weiterführung, die Romane Das Einhorn und Der Sturz betreffend," In: Martin Walser, hrsg. von Klaus Siblewski, suhrkamp taschenbuch 2003, 1. Auflage, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981).

[22]Ursula Reinhold, "Martin Walser: ' 'Erfahrung und Realismus'[1975]," In: Tendenzen und Autoren. Zur Literatur der siebziger Jahre in der BRD, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1982), pp. 263-283.

[23]Rainer Nägele, "Martin Walser. Die Gesellschaft im Spiegel des Subjekts," In: Zeitkritische Romane des 20. Jahrhunderts. Die Gesellschaft in der Kritik der deutschen Literatur, hrsg. von Hans Wagener, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), pp. 318-341.

Lore Ferguson's "Die Blechtrommel" von Günther Grass. Versuch einer Interpretation[24] provided the most plausible examination of the symbolism in Die Blechtrommel, while Heinz Hillmann's essay[25] offered the best background material on the Nazi era. Josef Mühlberger[26] aptly applies the label of opportunist to the Boss in Grass' Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand, but does not explore this idea as well as James Redmond in the article "Günther Grass and 'Der Fall Brecht'".[27]

Finally, of the vast number of critics who have grappled with Dürrenmatt and his three plays included in this study Gerhard Knapp[28] supplies much needed analyses of various political and ethical concepts in Dürrenmatt's work. Karl Guthke[29] and Ulrich

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[24]Lore Ferguson, "Die Blechtrommel" von Günther Grass. Versuch einer Interpretation, (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1976).

[25]Heinz Hillmann, "Günther Grass' Die Blechtrommel. Beispiel und Überlegungen zum Verfahren der Konfrontation von Literatur und Sozialwissenschaften," In: Der deutsche Roman, II, ed. Manfred Brauneck, (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1976), p. 15.

[26]Josef Mühlberger, "Bert Brecht als opportunistischer Modellfall. Zur Wiener Erstaufführung der Plebejer von Grass." In: Berichte und Informationen, österreichisches Forschungsinstitut für Wirtschaft und Politik, (Salzburg), 21 (1966) p. 15.

[27]James Redmond, "Günther Grass and 'Der Fall Brecht'," In: Modern Language Quarterly, 32 (1971), pp. 387-400.

[28]Mona and Gerhard P. Knapp, "Recht-Gerechtigkeit-Politik. Zur Genese der Begriffe im Werk Friedrich Dürrenmatts," In: Text und Kritik. Zeitschrift für Literatur, 56 (1977), pp.45-62.

[29]Karl S.Guthke "Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Besuch der alten Dame," In: Das deutsche Drama vom Expressionismus bis zur Gegenwart, hrsg. von Manfred Brauneck, 3. Auflage, (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1977), pp. 241-249.

Profitlich,[30] both of whom examine the townspeople of Güllen with as much intensity as they do Claire and Ill in Der Besuch der alten Dame, are consistently thorough in their respective studies. Gerwin Marahrens[31] provides much insight into Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi while Josef Strelka[32] concentrates his efforts on Der Mitmacher and has produced what is arguably the most worthwhile discussion on that play.

---

[30]Ulrich Profitlich, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Besuch der alten Dame," In: Die deutsche Komödie. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart. hrsg. von Walter Hinck, (Düsseldorf: August Bagel Verlag, 1977), 324-341.

[31]Gerwin Marahrens, "Friedrich Dürrenmatts Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi," In: Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk. hrsg. von Gerhard P. Knapp, 1. Auflage, (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1976), pp. 93-124.

[32]Joseph P. Strelka, "The Significance of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Play The Collaborator (Der Mitmacher)," In: Play Dürrenmatt, ed. Moshe Lazar, (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), pp. 97-105.

II Political Opportunists.

The first portion of this chapter will deal with political opportunists during and following the Second World War, who had ties to National Socialism. The discussion here will concern itself with the following works: Bertolt Brecht's Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg (1957), Günther Grass' Die Blechtrommel (1959), Heinrich Böll's Ansichten eines Clowns (1963), and, finally, Martin Walser's Halbzeit (1960).

The second major portion of this chapter will discuss the political opportunists who have no direct relation to National Socialism or the Second World War. Here specific characters from Günther Grass' Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand (1966) and Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi (1952) will be examined.

II 1. Political Opportunists Associated with National Socialism.

When one discusses political opportunists in the German-language literature published after 1945, one must necessarily consider those characters who had links with the NSDAP or were involved in the Second World War. The authors whose works will be examined in this study were all heavily influenced by the events of the war and its profound repercussions on German society which were apparent for many years afterward. These four works, one play and three novels, span from Schweyk, written in 1943 but published in 1957, to Ansichten eines Clowns, which appeared in 1963. Even into the mid-sixties, then, we can observe German authors grappling with

what many considered to be "the greatest catastrophe of German history".[1]

A specific pattern can be determined from the post-1945 literature of the West-German, i.e. non-Communist language region. Firstly, there occurred a brief, politically reflective phase of "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" which lasted from 1945 to approximately 1949. Among the significant authors here were Alfred Andersch, Wolfgang Borchert, and Hans Werner Richter. Secondly, there followed a "restorative" period of "political agnosticism", during which the Cold War raged.[2]

The political confrontation between the United States, which sought the restoration of capitalism in the West, and the Soviet Union, which strove to speed up the Communist expansion in the East and the Communist consolidation of the "buffer" states, was bound to have an effect on the concrete possibilities of German literature in their respective spheres of political influence. For example, it was naturally the Eastern block which, to a far greater degree, honoured the communist exile authors as being the truest representatives of the German spirit.[3] This restorative period was

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[1]Dieter Lattmann, hrsg., Kindlers Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart. Autoren. Werke. Themen. Tendenzen seit 1945. Die Literatur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, I, Aktualisierte Ausgabe, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1980), p. 6.

[2]Gerhard R. Kaiser, hrsg., Die deutsche Literatur. Ein Abriß in Text und Darstellung, Band 16. Gegenwart, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), pp. 13-14.

[3]Ibid., p. 14.

to last throughout the nineteen-fifties and into the early part of the next decade.[4]

As the Cold War and anti-Communist feeling became less intense, and towards the end of Adenauer's chancellorship (1949-63), one can see a third phase, that of the repoliticizing of German literature. Authors were openly involving themselves with political themes.[5] This third literary time-period coincided with the widespread student revolts, the women's liberation movement, the sexual revolution, and the generally iconoclastic mood of the sixties and seventies.[6] Key names here would include Wolfgang Koeppen, Hans Magnus Enzenberger, Heinrich Böll, and Günther Grass. But all these authors in the vacuum after 1945 -- "Stunde Null"-- were not interested in the restoration of old "geistige Begriffe" but in the traditions and truth of a better Germany.[7]

II 1.1 Schweyk

According to Herbert Knust, Der brave Soldat Schwejk had a tremendous influence on Bertolt Brecht and his later works. Brecht's ideas for a Schwejk adaptation can be found as far back as 1928, after he had worked on the staging of the original Hasek version in Berlin. The key notion of passive resistance is to be found there as well:

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 13.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Lattmann, Kindlers Literaturgeschichte, p. 9.

> Und die Schweyk werden in Bewegung gesetzt. Sie wehren sich nicht direkt, aber sie kommen nicht oder nicht rechtzeitig an. Es gibt Zwischenfälle, die sie hindern; sie brauchen mehr Zeit, sie verschwinden. Es gibt nirgendwo einen aktiven Widerstand; es nicht einmal im Gespräch eine Opposition, die direkt gegen Krieg gerichtet wäre: sie folgen allen Befehlen, sie respektieren ihre Vorgesetzten, sie setzen sich, wenn sie die Marschorder bekommen, in Bewegung. Aber niemals erreichen sie in der Zeit, die Ludendorff oben an der Karte bestimmt, ihren Bestimmungsort, und niemals erreichen sie ihn vollzählig.[8]

Another mention of the Schweyk-motif appears in the entry of July 15th, 1942 of Brecht's diary: "(...) und wieder möchte ich SCHWEYK machen, mit schnitten, daß man oben die herrschenden mächte sehen kann und unten den soldaten, der ihre großen pläne überlebt."[9]

One critic argues that "Schweyk" is a clear product of the extreme crisis situation of 1942-43. While Brecht was suffering under the pressure of the Hollywood atmosphere, which he found repulsive, there was a bloody slaughter happening on the eastern front. As Brecht coped with his doubts in the value of culture and intellectualism, he worked on this play which could be a useful tool of resistance, and educate others against the fascist ideologies, specifically National Socialism.[10]

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[8]Bertolt Brecht. Gesammelte Werke, Band 5. Stücke 5, Werkausgabe Edition, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967), p. 150. All quotations from the Schweyk play were taken from this edition. Subsequent quotations will appear in the text in parentheses.

[9]Knust, Materialien, p. 149.

[10]Hermand Jost, "Schweyk oder Horderlein? Brechts und Bechers Ostfrontdramen." In: TheaterZeitSchrift -- Hefte für Theatertheorie und -praxis, 3 (1983), p. 94.

Brecht best explains the original significance of the Schweykian theme:

> once again i was overwhelmed by hasek's vast panorama and the authentically un-positive point of view which it attributes to the people, they being themselves the one positive element and accordingly incapable of reacting "positively" to anything else. whatever happens schweyk mustn't turn into a cunning underhanded saboteur. he is merely an opportunist exploiting the tiny openings left him.[11]

Opportunism on the part of "des kleinen Mannes" is a necessary trait to ensure his survival. In short, opportunism has been assessed a higher ethical value quotient than this study's standardized definition allows. If the individual within society is to survive the megalomania of the world leaders, he must exploit whatever opportunities are left him to obstruct such megalomaniac urges. Passive resistance or sabotage through delayed arrival, double-talk, or engineered confusion are the keys to this brand of opportunism. This is not an unprincipled, unscrupulous, or unethical individual; rather Schweyk, the constant in society, has been forced to adapt himself to the prevalent attitudes and theories of whatever happens to be the so-called "popular" government. Thus the "little guy" must be chameleon-like to survive the whims of the transient, comparatively short-lived world/national leaders. As outlined in the "Schweyk-Fabel":

> der brave soldat schweyk, der bereits den ersten weltkrieg überlebt hat, ist noch am leben und unsere geschichte zeigt seine erfolgreichen bemühungen, auch den zweiten weltkrieg zu überleben. natürlich sind die pläne und ideen der neuen herrscher noch größer und totaler als

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[11]Mannheim, Willet, Brecht. Collected Plays, p. 287.

> die der alten und so hat es der kleine mann heute noch schwerer, halbwegs am leben zu bleiben.[12]

The little guy, the average civilian citizen, is the one who must cope with and survive the potentially lethal side-effects of the great men's lust for power and glory:

> sein [Hitlers] polizeichef versichert ihm [Hitler], daß der kleine mann in europa dieselbe liebe für ihn fühlt wie der kleine mann in deutschland. dafür sorgt die gestapo. der führer hat nichts zu befürchten und kann unbesorgt an die welteroberung gehen.[13]

and later:

> (...) der besorgte hitler, der in den russischen winter geraten ist, braucht mehr soldaten. er erkundigt sich bei dem besorgten goebbels, ob der kleine mann in europa für ihn kämpfen wird, und dieser versichert ihm, daß der kleine mann in europa genau so für ihn kämpfen wird wie der kleine mann in deutschland: dafür sorgt die gestapo.[14]

Brecht underlines this again and again throughout the play making his protagonist Schweyk a fast-talking, amiable fellow with the best interests of friends at heart. He is never portrayed as morally unscrupulous, rather Schweyk is made to be the hero of the little guy -- he does his best to carry on with life adapting himself, coquetting to authority wherever necessary, but without ever forgetting that he and his friends are Czechs and that their duty is to resist the National Socialist oppressor and interloper:

> Wenn du im Krieg ieberleben willst, halt dich eng an die andern und das lebliche, keine Extratouren, sondern kuschn, solang bis du beißen kannst. Der Krieg dauert nicht ewig, so wenig wie der Friedn (...). Es wird

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[12] Knust, Materialien, p. 157.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 163.

> wieder Leut geben, wo Hund wolln und Stammbäum wern gefälscht wern, weils reine Rassn wolln, es is Unsinn, aber sie wollns (p. 1990).

Consider the character Baloun who is the weak-willed Czech who wants to resist Nazism but also needs food. To satisfy such elementary wants he is tempted to enlist and fight for Hitler:

> Baloun: (...) Ihr müßt was unternehmen mit mir, sonst verkomm ich vollends, ich kann nicht mehr ein guter Tschech sein aufn leeren Magen (p. 1921-22).

Of course, the reference here is to the poor but strictly enforced rations and desperate conditions the residents of occupied countries endured in contrast to the comparatively well-off military and police figures:

> Baloun: (...) Sind die Portionen immer so groß in der Armee, Herr Soldat? Die Ihre is hibsch groß. Aber vielleicht is es nur auf Wache, da Sie gut wach bleibn, sonst könntn wir Ihnen davon, wie? Könnt ich vielleicht einmal dran riechen? (p. 1955).

Indeed Schweyk and the "Kelch" landlady, Frau Kopeka, go to great lengths to get meat to sate Baloun's appetite. They try to induce the butcher's son to steal two pounds of smoked butt to "prove" his love for Frau Kopeka (p. 1921). They warn Baloun what happens when someone goes to battle on the eastern front:

> Schweyk: (...) Es beweist dir, daß du zweimal überlegen sollst, bis du etwas Unüberlegtes tust. Laß dir nicht einfallen, nach Rußland zu ziehn mitn Hitler wegen große Rationen und dann erfrierst du, du Ochs (p. 1921).

Schweyk asks Frau Kopeka to feed Baloun the corpse of Votja's spitz even though Bullinger wants the dog -- alive:

> Schweyk: (...) Baloun is mir zu begeistert. Gebens reichlich Paprika hinein, daß es wie Rind schmeckt. Es is Roß. [Wenn sie ihn scharf anblickt:] Gut es is der Spitz vom Herrn Votja. Ich habs machen missn, weil die Schande aufn "Kelch" zurückfällt, wenn einer von Ihre

> Stammgäst aus Hunger bei die Deutschen einrückt (p. 1961).

Schweyk, unlike Baloun, never loses his composure -- even when he is being questioned in Gestapo headquarters for his questionable remarks about Hitler. His quick-witted opportunism saves him:

> Bullinger: (...) [Zu Schweyk:] (...) Zuerst stelle ich dir eine Frage. Wenn du schon da die Antwort nicht weißt, Sau, dann nimmt Müller 2 -- [auf den SS-Mann]-- dich in den Keller zum Erziehen, verstehst du? Die Frage lautet: Scheißt du dick oder scheißt du dünn?
>
> Schweyk: Meld gehorsamst, Herr Scharführer, ich scheiß, wie Sies wünschen.
>
> Bullinger: Antwort korrekt (p. 1929).

Schweyk consistently plays the fool when he is in fact a very clever individual. He is able to provoke the NS officials, because he hides under the cover of idiocy; otherwise, he would never have survived this long under the NS regime. Schweyk understands that the "fool" in society is rarely oppressed because those in authority take little account of his ramblings. When directly examined, Schweyk will tell the officials precisely what they want to hear. However, by playing the fool, he can reveal his true feelings with little fear of retaliation.

In the end, Schweyk himself is forced to serve in Russia as his schemes to feed Baloun go awry. But ultimately even the weak Baloun vows:

> (...) jetz ohne weiteres und aufn leeren Magn, weil alle Versuche von verschiedenen Seiten, Fleisch für mich aufzutreibn, gescheitert sind, also ohne da ich ein richtiges Mahl gekriegt hätt, bei der Jungfrau Maria und allen Heiligen, da ich nie freiwillig in das Naziheer eintreten wer, so wahr mir Gott, der Allmächtige, helfe (p. 1980).

He goes on to say that he swears this oath in memory of that good man Schweyk who now trudges through Russia's icy steppes in fulfillment of his duty, since there was no way for him to avoid it. The two implications here are that had an occasion presented itself through which Schweyk's quick mind and fast talking would have helped him, Schweyk would never ever be fighting for Hitler. He does so only on pain of death. Secondly, Baloun has shown that in recognition of his friend's sacrifice, the initial cause of which was Baloun's own hunger, Baloun will adopt a stricter self-discipline and refuse to collaborate voluntarily.

In strong contrast to Schweyk's brand of "principled" opportunism, the collaborator is treated with contempt. For example, Schweyk is undoubtedly loathe to co-operate with Bullinger, "Scharführer" of the SS, and steal Vojta's dog. He decides that if he must indeed stoop to outright collaboration, he might as well be recompensed for his troubles:

> Schweyk: (...) Ein Kollaborationist arbeitet für nix, sondern umgekehrt, er verdient sogar mehr, weil er von seine Landsleute verachtet wird. Dafür muß ich entschedigt wern, warum sonst (p. 1954)?

Schweyk illustrates that if he appears to serve and pay court to Bullinger, then Bullinger will in turn protect Schweyk from other potential sources of harm within the NS ranks. Thus explains Schweyk's comment to his fellow prisoners after his arrest:

> Der Kurzsichtige: Aber man muß ihnen [die Nazis] nicht noch in den Arsch kriechen.
>
> Schweyk [belehrend]: Sagns das nicht. Es is eine Kunst. Manches kleinere Vieh möcht sich freun, wenns einem Tiger hineinkäm. Da kann ers nicht erreichn, und es fühlt sich

> verhältnismäßig sicher, es is aber schwer hineinkommen (p. 1973).

Vojta, the Quisling, is portrayed as a hard master to his servants, and loathed by his fellow Czechs because he is not opportunistic for the sake of Czechoslovakia and merely surviving; he collaborates voluntarily with the oppressor against his own countrymen:

> Schweyk: (...) Der Vojta is gemein zu die Dienstmädchen, sie is schon die dritten seit Lichtmeß und will schon weg, her ich, weil die Nachbarn sie triezen, weil sie bei einem Herrn is, wo ein Quisling is. Da is es ihr gleich, wenn sie ohne Hund heimkommt, sie muß nur nix dafir können (p. 1947).

Later Schweyk comments about the spitz they stole from Vojta:

> Er is der echte Hund von einem Quisling, wo beißt, wenn man nicht hinschaut. Am Weg hat er mir schreckliche Sachen aufgefiehrt (p. 1951).

One other opportunist appears in this play. He, too, like Vojta renounces his dearest principles for personal expediency only. This character is the "Feldkurat", whom Schweyk encounters as he marches towards Stalingrad. This cleric displays no Christian virtues, be it love for his fellow man, or even adherence to Bible teaching:

> Feldkurat: (...) Ich verzicht für sie [die Nazis] auf den Herrn Jesu als einen Juden und mach ihn in der Predigt zu einem Christen, da es nur so kracht, mit blauen Augen, und flegt den Wotan ein (...), weil ich ein Schwein bin, ein abtrünniges, wo seinen Glauben verraten hat fürs Gehalt (...) (p. 1982).

This fellow, who is blind drunk and wearing two fur coats would have assaulted two helpless Russian peasant women for a shawl and a bottle of vodka, had Schweyk not intervened (p. 1984). Thus Vojta

and the "Feldkurat" are clear foils for Schweyk's principled brand of opportunism.

True to Brecht's fashion, songs are scattered throughout the play. Two of these describe very specifically the role of the government leaders hungry for power, versus the role of the average fellow. Both songs are found subsequent to Schweyk's arrest. One of these, a parody of the "Horst Wessel Lied", Schweyk sings to his cell-mates; it discusses how the "little guy" must populate Hitler's armies and actually fight the battles, and suffer the consequences. Hitler himself cares little about the carnage he has initiated:

> Hinter der Trommel her
> Trotten die Kälber
> Das Fell für die Trommel
> Liefern sie selber.
>
> Der Metzger ruft. Die Augen fest geschlossen
> Das Kalb marschiert mit ruhig festem Tritt.
> Die Kälber, deren Blut im Schlachthof schon geflossen
> Sie ziehn im Geist in seinen Reihen mit (p. 1976).

The other song is sung first by Frau Kopeka in Scene six, immediately after Schweyk has been arrested (p. 1968). Later the last two verses are sung by a chorus of the entire cast at the conclusion of the epilogue. Here with one final thrust, Brecht indicates that in this interminable rise and fall of powerful personages, the only constant is the average man. His opportunism has, therefore, been forced upon him as a survival tool. The ordinary man cannot afford the luxury of freely voicing his moral, political, or social principles if he desires a long life, since such principles would surely offend some ideology one day and result in that persons's persecution and possible execution.

Ultimately, then, to survive the constant transition of the popular or acceptable political, social, religious, moral, and economic positions of whomever happens to hold the reins of power, the individual is compelled to adapt and obstruct -- subtly, without ever renouncing his own values. As a result, opposition to these leaders can never be active, or forceful, but rather a quiet, Schweykian contempt and rejection of the oppressor, secure in the knowledge that this ruler will one day tumble as all his predecessors have done:

> Es wechseln die Zeiten. Die riesigen Pläne
> Der Mächtigen kommen am Ende zum Halt.
> Und gehn sie einher auch wie blutige Hähne
> Es wechseln die Zeiten, da hilft kein Gewalt.
>
> Am Grunde der Moldau wandern die Steine
> Es liegen drei Kaiser begraben in Prag.
> Das Große bleibt groß nicht und klein nicht das Kleine.
> Die Nacht hat zwölf Stunden, dann kommt schon der Tag
> (pp. 1993-94).

II 1.2. Alfred Matzerath and Meyn.

Brecht's approach to opportunism was to divide it into two camps -- opportunism born of necessity as opposed to collaboration for monetary gain. With Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg along with Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Cäsar (publ. 1949-57), for example, he attempts to open the eyes of his contemporaries to the horrific realities of National Socialism.[15] Brecht tries to isolate and illustrate the various primary causes which ultimately allowed

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[15]Helmut Koopman, "Günther Grass. Der Faschismus und was daraus wurde." In: Gegenwartsliteratur und Drittes Reich: deutsche Autoren in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit, hrsg. von Hans Wagener, 1. Auflage, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977), p. 163.

Hitler's rise to power; economic destruction, a weak democracy, a corrupt state, strong petit-bourgeois support due to mass-seduction, along with Hitler's lack of scruples and financial clout.[16] Like other German émigré authors of the Second World War, Brecht displays a tendency to hide behind history in order to indicate to his contemporaries the comforting notion that as other despots fell in the past, so too must Hitler. Thus history was used not merely to parallel present conditions but to legitimize the hope for better times, since current events revealed themselves as a distorted repetition of historical events. After all, these émigrés were seeking to explain rationally to themselves and others, how a great nation like Germany could possibly have degenerated to the level of a brutal dictatorship.[17]

With the advent of the nineteen-sixties a new generation of authors began to look at National Socialism without the mediating filter of historical analogies. Günther Grass' novel Die Blechtrommel (1959) was the harbinger of this literary swing. Grass analyses National Socialism in its manifestations and various repercussions harshly and graphically. As well, Grass handles the National Socialist phenomenon ahistorically. He is more concerned with chronicling the collaboration of the petit-bourgeois opportunists than with presuming to find causes in the past.

In Die Blechtrommel, Grass is illustrating and at the same time protesting the given constitution of society, but with a

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[16] Ibid., pp. 163-64.

[17] Ibid., p. 166.

specific focus. The milieu presented for the reader is of a small, self-interested environment filled with small, self-interested people. The "Kleinbürgertum" for Grass is a "Humusboden", and a vital form of humanity.[18] Ernst Bloch in his essay "Der Faschismus als Erscheinungsform der Ungleichzeitigkeit" (1932),[19] notes that the youth of all the social classes turned away from the "verdinglichten Leben von heute" and desired a new perspective on life. However, it was the petit-bourgeois youth who were especially searching for order and meaning which they found in National Socialism. They turned to "Träume", "Spielen und Schwärmereien" which they sought in group situations: "Bünde von sehr alten Zuschnitt tauchen (...) auf, bluthaftes, greifbares Leben in kleinen Gruppen mit einem genannten Führer."[20]

In this novel, the interplay is missing among the other social classes, the large political organizations, key political figures, and the historical process. History has been reduced to an eternal "Wiederkehr des Gleichen" and economics as merely "Geschäfts- und Haushaltsführung der Familie."[21] Grass treats National Socialism as a phenomenon of a "sozusagen naturgegebenen Mittelschicht",[22] but

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[18]Manfred Durzak, Der deutsche Roman der Gegenwart, (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1971), p. 290.

[19]Heinz Hillmann, "Günther Grass' Die Blechtrommel. Beispiel und Überlegungen zum Verfahren der Konfrontation von Literatur und Sozialwissenschaften," In: Der deutsche Roman, II, ed. Manfred Brauneck, (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1976), p. 15.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 16.

he does not explain from whence, nor how this came into being on a social level; he also does not describe explicitly how the Party could build itself out of a socio-political sphere. The "Kleinbürger" is in the foreground, while the global, political, economic, and historical events all lie in the background. The reason is simply that the "Kleinbürger", blinkered in his little world, does not reflect critically upon events in the greater world around him. Thus he can do nothing to prevent, obstruct, or denounce the rise of a political party like National Socialism. Instead, the "Kleinbürger" facilitates such a party by his compliance and his need for guidance and spectacle.

"Kleinbürgertum" has been juxtaposed to National Socialism following the "bürgerliche Faschismustheorie" prevalent in the 1950s.[23] Justification for this theory lies in the fact that the "Kleinbürgertum" is the sphere which remains untouched and unmoved by the impressive force of technology and its side-effects: increased social mobility; the levelling of differences between urban centres, a consumer-oriented consciousness, and the steady demise of the old middle-class moral values.[24]

After having examined "Kleinbürgertum" in its generalities in order to uncover the basis for the "kleinbürgerliche Mitmacherei" leading up to and during the war, we must now turn to two

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[23]Frank-Raymund Richter, Günther Grass. Die Vergangenheitsbewältigung in der Danzig-Trilogie, (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1979), p. 144.

[24]Reinhard Baumgart, "Kleinbürgertum und Realismus," In: Neue Rundschau, 85 (1966), pp. 651-52.

manifestations within specific characters in the novel and their opportunistic relations to their society. The key petit-bourgeois figures in Die Blechtrommel (Oskar Matzerath aside) are Alfred Matzerath and the musician Meyn. Their common link to National Socialism is their "Mitmacherei", in order to sate their desire for order and security within their personal lives.

II 1.2.1. Alfred Matzerath.

Early in the novel, Oskar speaks of "Matzeraths korrekten, mitteleuropäischen, wie man sehen wird, zukunftsträchtigen Kleinbürgertum."[25] Alfred Matzerath, whose wife is having an affair with her cousin and their long-time friend, takes flight into the realm of Order which he sees embodied in National Socialism.

To find order, to compensate for his chaotic personal life, Matzerath "trat im Jahre vierunddreißig, also verhältnismäßig früh die Kräfte der Ordnung erkennend, in die Partei ein" (p. 92). He acquires the uniform piece by piece, desiring to "belong":

> Nach und nach kaufte sich Matzerath die Uniform zusammen. Wenn ich mich recht erinnere, begann er mit der Parteimütze, die er gerne, auch bei sonnigem Wetter mit unterm Kinn scheuerndem Sturmriemen trug. Eine Zeitlang zog er weiße Oberhemden mit schwarzer Krawatte zu dieser Mütze an oder eine Windjacke mit Armbinde. Als er das erste braune Hemd kaufte, wollte er eine Woche später auch die kackbraunen Reithosen und Stiefel erstehen. Mama war dagegen, und es dauerte abermals Wochen, bis Matzerath endgültig in Kluft war (p. 93).

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[25]Günther Grass, Die Blechtrommel, (Darmstadt: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag GmbH, 1981), p. 164. All subsequent quotations from this novel have been taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

He appears to the reader as the typical "Mitläufer" whose custom is "immer zu winken, wenn andere winkten, immer zu schreien, zu lachen und zu klatschen, wenn andere schrien, lachten oder klatschten" (p. 123). Matzerath acts out of herd-instinct, or indifference, all because he hopes to find something concrete in the Party -- a feeling of security which would enable him to ignore his own feelings of insecurity.

Matzerath's entry into the Party appears emotionally rather than politically motivated. He is affected by the uniforms, banners, colours, and speeches; through him is shown the "kleinbürgerliche Massenpsyche".[26] National Socialism provides Matzerath with a "fester Orientierungspunkt" about which to organize his life. His personal sphere, i.e. the household of which he is not in control, is dissonant; thus he seeks harmony in the opposite extreme: in the public sphere of Nazism, which vehemently denies personal freedom and choice.[27] However, the chaos in his life is not eliminated by ideology. Matzerath's actions are guided more by instinct than reflection, and he is oblivious to the broader implications of these actions, which is so typical of both the opportunist and petit-bourgeois.

Matzerath, the "kleinbürgerliche Mitläufer", who so embraced the NS movement that he was willing to give his son over to the Ministry of Health for extermination, must die with the downfall of the Third Reich. It is no coincidence that Alfred chokes on his

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[26]Richter, Vergangenheitsbewältigung, p. 37.

[27]Ibid.

party-pin, which represents the political feelings of the age.[28] His death, brought on by unreflective acceptance of, and adaptation to, imposed, artificial order and security, regardless of their implications, heralds the start of a new age. With Alfred Matzerath's demise, the reader, like Oskar, is deluded into believing that the people in society, having learned their lesson, will cast off their blinkers and become more aware and critical of their relations to their social and historical situation.

II 1.2.2. Meyn.

"Ordnung" and "Einordnung" are even more plainly searched for by the character Meyn than by Matzerath. As well, one can perceive in this character, as with Alfred, both "Rausch- und Spektakelbedürfnisse".[29] The channelling of repressed needs which are clearly hinted at with Matzerath (e.g. while both books and synagogue are consumed by flames, "wärmt er seine Finger und seine Gefühle über dem öffentlichen Feuer" (p. 163)), are also apparent in Meyn. One need only consider Meyn's development from a member of a communist youth organization, to a lonely alcoholic and musician, to a member of the SA.

We are never explicitly told why Meyn is a lonely, insecure alcoholic, nor why he joined such a left-wing organization. But Grass allows us to infer that Meyn, like the other characters in

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[28]Lore Ferguson, "Die Blechtrommel" von Günther Grass. Versuch einer Interpretation, (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1976), p. 94.

[29]Hillmann, "Grass. Beispiel und Überlegungen." p. 14.

the novel, grew up in a petit-bourgeois environment which offe[illegible] neither spiritual nor intellectual fulfillment, nor good job prospects. As a result, he seeks meaning in the youth group. Dissatisfied, however, with the group and his job, Meyn seeks compensation in alcohol, music, sleep, and cats. Unfortunately, such a life provides him with no greater meaning or fulfillment.[30]

Meyn obviously wants to join the SA to go from a disorderly, insecure life to a regimented, secure one. He would thus be able to escape his loneliness, and the contempt of his fellow "Kleinbürger" by finding security and meaning for his life in a group context. Meyn's jump onto the National Socialist bandwagon, this blatant opportunism, reveals utterly hopeless dissatisfaction with the possibilities of his petit-bourgeois existence. He no longer has to grapple, let alone come to terms with his personal problems. Instead, they are pushed aside through Meyn's flight into the public, group situation, which in turn provides artificial, superimposed order to confused, petit-bourgeois lives like those of Meyn and Matzerath.

Both Meyn and Matzerath have frustrations in their personal sphere of work and home-lives for which in the pre-NS era they attempted to compensate in private with their cooking and jokes, respectively.[31] With the advent of the NSDAP, both men can compensate in public-political flight supplied by right-wing totalitarianism. Yet once integrated into the organizations of

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[30] Ibid., p. 12.

[31] Ibid., p. 13.

National Socialism, the desire for conformity is increased until a fear of non-conformity begins to dictate their private spheres as well: Alfred's uniform, his picture of Hitler, his advice to Jan, and Meyn's ascetic lifestyle are all examples of this.

Meyn ultimately is forced to face his internal conflict of the individual and mass psyche. Thus he attacks his cats, which represent his private sphere of music, in order to free himself from the fetters preventing his complete devotion to the public sphere.[32] When his brutal act ironically results in possible expulsion from the SA, he attempts to salvage his position by violence to "genau bezeichnete Geschäfte" (p. 162) during the "Kristallnacht". Rather than allowing his actions to be guided by reason, Meyn is swayed by the power of the word and the impression of the object. Thus deprived of his individual psyche, he can truly be a part of the mass of SA-uniforms, whose ultimate goal is the elimination of "Geist" and "Natur" through the elimination of a specific belief and its adherents.[33]

The desire for compensation for personal frustration and insecurity gives more support to the belief that the "Kleinbürger" were ripe for National Socialism. First theatre (both "Stadt- und Waldoper"), then a circus, and finally political theatre provide mass entertainment and escapism. However, the theatre and circus are not only complemented, but ultimately superceded by the political rostrum. Thus we see how the herd-mentality can adjust

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ferguson, Versuch einer Interpretation, p. 71.

itself from local cultural activities to well-staged political rallies:

> Das stand da und berührte sich mit Ellenbogen und Sonntagskleidung (...), das hatte zum Teil die Frühmesse besucht und war dort nicht zufriedengestellt worden, das war gekommen, um seiner Braut am Arm etwas zu bieten, das wollte mit dabeisein, wenn Geschichte gemacht wird, und wenn auch der Vormittag dabei draufging (p. 96).

It becomes most apparent that Meyn like Matzerath is also representative of the figures who were raised in a similar petit-bourgeois environment under similar circumstances. As such these two characters are effective "kleinbürgerliche" caricatures, illustrating the chilling fact that the rise of National Socialism was facilitated by the thousands of "Kleinbürger" who felt and behaved precisely as did Matzerath and Meyn.

II 1.3. Dr. Kalick.

In Ansichten eines Clowns (1963) Heinrich Böll, like Günther Grass before him, takes a look at society as it presents itself to the subject-hero. The reader is confronted with a series of vignettes whose sole conjunction is their relationship to the protagonist. Böll uses this form to criticize pointedly the post-war society found in the Federal Republic of Germany, satirizing those aspects of Church, state, and society which offend him most deeply. Through the character Hans Schnier, the author convincingly plays incongruent paradoxes against one another in order to illustrate what he sees as the corruption within the Federal Republic of Germany: reality clashes with Schnier's ideals as morality squares off against business. More specifically, Böll

attacks the rejuvenated Protestant work ethic of the eighteenth century which has shown itself in the "new" German society's attitudes as it continues rebuilding the power of free market trade throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[34]

Böll rues this resurgence of the Enlightenment principles which exhort individual autonomy in its belief that humanity's highest ideal involves the self-realization of the individual.[35] Moral categories are displaced by the factors of supply and demand; too many people champion equality, freedom, tolerance, democracy, and private property at the expense of brotherly love.[36] As a result, then, it is no wonder competition and the desire for personal success drive people to greedy, opportunistic behaviour in the political and economic spheres. Years of poverty and privation urge the less-privileged to strive even harder, while the wealthy become richer and more self-righteous. Ethics are thus determined by those who do succeed and amass personal wealth. Böll, therefore, directs his attack at both the individuals, the institutions, "Weltbilder", or ideologies which contribute to this dehumanization of man.[37] At the same time, Böll vents much of his contempt towards former Nazis who manage to integrate and establish themselves in the post-war economy, state, and military, and those

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[34]Günther Packendorf, "Die verlorene Ehre der kleinen Leute," In: Acta Germanica. Jahrbuch des südafrikanischen Germanistenverbandes, 15 (1982), hrsg. von Dieter Welz, p. 116.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., p. 120.

who facilitate this integration.[38] Firstly, Böll attacked the war and National Socialism; later he lambastes the achievement and consumer-oriented society of the 1950s and '60s.[39]

As one critic commented regarding the Roman Catholic institution:

> Böll setzt sich nicht für Unmoral oder verantwortungsloses Zusammengehen und Wiederauseinanderlaufen ein, sondern er wehrt sich dagegen, daß unter dem Deckmantel "christlicher" Absichten Gesetzesdenken, theologischer Legalismus und gesellschaftlicher Opportunismus als Kampfmittel gegen einen Menschen eingesetzt werden.[40]

This specific example by Schädlich indicates that the opportunistic motto of "every man for himself" was adopted even by clerical bodies in sharp opposition to their Christian dogma. Böll takes it upon himself to champion the cause of the weak and poor by unmasking the rampant hypocracy and opportunism in Germany's consumer and self-oriented society, since the responsible institutions have abdicated their duties.

In this section we shall see how Böll discloses one character's political opportunism through flashback. Two other former Nazi figures appear in this novel; however, neither Schnitzler, the writer, nor Brühl, the teacher, exemplify a fundamental opportunistic metamorphosis as completely as the

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[38]Michael Schädlich, "Satire und Barmherzigkeit in Heinrich Bölls Roman Ansichten eines Clowns," In: Titelaufnahmen. Studien zu Werken von Thomas Mann, Heinrich Böll, Max Frisch, Graham Greene, Michail Bulgakov, Hermann Kant und Stefan Heym, (Berlin: Union Presse Hass, 1978), p. 65.

[39]Packendorf, "Die verlorene Ehre," p. 120.

[40]Schädlich, "Satire und Barmherzigkeit," pp. 70-71.

character of Dr. Kalick.[41] It is through such a figure that Böll, similar to Grass, reveals the extent to which the past intermingles with the present: those who were successful during the war do everything to regain much of their lost status after the war.[42]

Herbert Kalick, like all the figures in the book, save perhaps Schnier's father, are all characterized through the filter of Hans' own fragmented, subjective consciousness. Over a three-hour period, we encounter faces, and images whom Hans has collected and characterized.[43] Kalick never appears objectively, but his appearances within Hans' recollections serve to create a type or a caricature of an abstract, representative image.[44]

The fourteen year old Hitler Youth leader fervently believed in NS ideology and himself. The prototypical young Aryan, "blaß, blond, mit seinem fanatischen Gesicht, als eine Art Staatsanwalt fungierend, schlug dauernd mit den Knöcheln auf die Anrichte und

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[41]Schnitzler was the devout National Socialist author who was served a 10 month writing-ban for a petty offence by the "Reichsschrifttumskammer" and then was greeted by the U.S. forces as a resistance-fighter. He went on to make himself indispensible in the State Department. Brühl espoused and preached NS ideology until after the war when he found himself a post at the "Pädagogische Hochschule". Society deemed him courageous for not having joined the Party.

[42]Rainer Nägele, "Heinrich Böll. Die große Ordnung und die kleine Anarchie," In: Gegenwartsliteratur und Drittes Reich: deutsche Autoren in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit, hrsg. von Hans Wagener, 1. Auflage, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977), p. 195.

[43]C.A.M. Noble, "Die Ansichten eines Clowns und ihre Stellung in Bölls epischer Entwicklung," In: Böll. Untersuchungen zum Werk, hrsg. von Manfred Jurgensen, (Bern/München: Francke Verlag, 1975), p. 156.

[44]Ibid., p. 267.

forderte: 'Härte, Härte, unnachgiebige Härte.'"[45] This is Herbert Kalick's cry when Hans' father and grandfather question the lad's seriousness in calling Herbert a Nazi swine. Even Lövenich, the NS deputy district leader, felt the eleven year old Hans should be treated leniently for this offence, but not Brühl or Herbert.

An adolescent squabble becomes a major issue for Herbert who demands retribution. Indeed, when little Georg accidentally blows himself and the Apollo statue to bits, Herbert's "lakonisch[e]" (p. 36) remark further illustrates his utter lack of feeling and perverted sensibilities: "Zum Glück war Georg ja ein Waisenkind" (p. 36). Furthermore, Kalick decides that it would be a good idea to mobilize an orphanage for the "final battle" (p. 225). This is the man who ironically receives the "Bundesverdienstkreuz" due to "seine[r] Verdienste um die Verbreitung des demokratischen Gedankens in der Jugend" (p. 225).

It is fitting, then, that such a man without true principle should have a doll-like, pretty, vacuous wife and one offspring to complement his own lack of substance. Herbert's attempt at reconciliation with Hans fails dismally once Schnier recounts Kalick's attitude to Jewish Yankees and Italians (p. 227-28). Schnier cannot stomach the radical transformation in Kalick, since Kalick's previous fanaticism and present sincerity reek of hypocracy: "Ich habe zuviel Augenblicke im Kopf, zuviel

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[45]Heinrich Böll, Ansichten eines Clowns. Roman. Mit Materialien und einem Nachwort des Autors, KiWi 86, (Köln: Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1963/1985), p. 35. All subsequent quotations from this novel have been taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

Winzigkeiten -- und Herberts Augen haben sich nicht geändert" (p. 229).

No doubt, Kalick dearly hoped he and Hans could reconcile and become friends. But the fervour with which Herbert conducts his life as the model "Bundesbürger" belies his moral wantonness. His conduct at one of Mrs. Schnier's levies, as he discusses "Jewish spirituality" with an unsuspecting rabbi, is pathetic in its sincerity. As Hans recounts, "Natürlich erzählte Herbert jedem, den er kennenlernte, daß er Nazi und Antisemit gewesen sei, daß die 'Geschichte ihm aber die Augen geöffnet' habe" (p. 229). Indeed, history does instruct the conformists and opportunists. History is written by the winners, and the Kalicks in society are always on the side of the winners. These types have no sense of "stooping" to do something, or of swallowing their pride because they will bend and bend without snapping to suit the dictates of the day. The most frightening aspect of the true conformist, like Kalick, is that he also fervently <u>believes</u> in whatever ideology he happens to support at a given time: "Kalick wäre nie an die Front geschickt worden, der spurte, so wie er heute spurt. Er ist der geborene Spurer" (p. 230).

II 1.4. Gallus Kristlein.

Martin Walser's approach to literary social criticism differs rather startlingly from that of Heinrich Böll. Whereas Böll questions the actions of an individual, as to whether the character's behaviour is historically responsible and tolerant,

Walser uses the analysis of the social mechanism in its context with a person's behaviour as the point of departure. From the outset, then, Walser directs his attention to the results of the laws of social mobility.[46]

According to Walser's theory of literature, social reality must mesh with one's own experiences and observations in order to be considered relevant in a literary context.[47] This notion extends into one's own social class:

> Eines ist sicher, wo auch immer sie [Schriftsteller] selber ihre Wurzeln sehen mögen, wer die Stücke kennt, sieht, daß die Wurzeln in der proletarisch-kleinbürgerlichen Herkunft liegen; was sie schreiben, ist eine Auseinandersetzung mit den Erfahrungen der Klasse, aus der sie stammen.[48]

Realism for Walser, as with Grass and Böll, demands that the author may not soar in flights of fancy which would distort the reality he describes. Instead an author's creations must coax from reality, that which it seeks to hide. Thus he relies on precise, highly detailed renditions of his exact observations.[49] Nevertheless, the world within a novel must always be recognized as a fictional one.[50]

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[46]Ursula Reinhold, "Erfahrung und Realismus, 1975, In: Tendenzen und Autoren, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1982), p. 266.

[47]Ibid., p. 267.

[48]Martin Walser, "Wie und wovon handelt Literatur," In: Sinn und Form: Beiträge zur Literatur, 26 (1974), p. 431.

[49]Reinhold, "Erfahrung und Realismus, 1975", pp. 268-69.

[50]Stephan Petro, jr., "Die Bedeutung Prousts für Martin Walsers Roman Halbzeit. Nachgewiesen an den gesellschaftlichen Zusammenkünften," Diss. The University of Conneticut, 1976, p. 172.

We see that Walser, too, concerns himself with the petit-bourgeois element in society. However, he does not wish to be considered a "Gesellschaftskritiker": "Ich wollte gar nicht sagen, wie die Gesellschaft sein soll."[51] As a member of society Walser feels he cannot ever achieve the "critical distance" required to criticize objectively his own social constituency: "Ich gehöre zu dieser Gesellschaft, und das ist für mich der erste Grund, warum ich mich nicht in eine Distanz bringen kann, die einer Kritik zugrunde liegen müßte."[52] He also deplores the so-called "Gesellschaftskritiker" whom he likens to a "Bedeutungslieferant" who must command a phenomenal number of points of view. Walser feels such a person, as an author, would do well to keep his "Zeigefinger (...) in der Tasche (...)."[53]

> Ein Schreiber der alles schon weiß, oder alles schon besser weiß, der kann nicht mehr so schreiben, daß es zu jener spannenden Entdeckungsfahrt kommt, an der der Leser dann wirklich teilnimmt. Wenn der Autor die Arbeit des Schreibens nicht nur zur eigenen Veränderung braucht, dann wird er auch keinen anderen verändern. Möchte ich behaupten. Und das, soweit es Literatur betrifft.[54]

Should a work later be considered a valid critique on contemporary social conditions, then that is the work not of the author, according to Walser, but of critical readership.[55] Upon

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[51] Ibid., p. 165.

[52] Ibid., p. 166.

[53] Ibid., p. 165

[54] Walser, "Wie und wovon handelt Literatur," p. 435.

[55] Hildegard Emmel, "Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild im Wechselspiel zu Martin Walsers Roman Halbzeit," In: Kritische Intelligenz als Methode. Alte und neue Aufsätze über sieben Jahrhunderte deutscher

receiving the Hermann-Hesse prize for literature in 1957, Walser stressed: "Daß [der Schriftsteller] ein Beobachter ist, das ist eine notwendige Arbeitsbedingung, aber ebenso notwendig ist es, daß er ein Mitleidender ist."[56] He elaborates on this idea saying that since an author, as a member of society is conditioned by that society, then the book and characters the author creates are necessarily marked by his own social background and biases. In this way a novel may carry within itself the seeds of social criticism.[57]

It follows, then, that since Walser's key political and ideological experiences are tied closely to the development of U.S.-style capitalism in the Federal Republic of Germany, and thus with political and economy restoration following the Second World War,[58] these events would strongly affect the content and tone of his observations, and therefore his writing. "Man kann nicht denken, ich möchte das und das bewirken. Das würde, glaube ich, das Schreiben verderben."[59]

Walser's treatment of Dr. Gallus Kristlein is dependent upon the above description of his conception of the interrelationship

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Literatur, hrsg. und eingegleitet von Christiane Zehl Romero. (Bern/München: Francke Verlag, 1981), p. 153.

[56]Petro, "Die Bedeutung Prousts," p. 168.

[57]Emmel, "Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild," p. 153.

[58]Reinhold, "Erfahrung und Realismus," p. 265.

[59]Rainer Nägele "Martin Walser. Die Gesellschaft im Spiegel des Subjekts," In: Zeitkritische Romane des 20. Jahrhunderts. Die Gesellschaft in der Kritik der deutschen Literatur, hrsg. von Hans Wagener, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), p. 331.

between observation and literature. Gallus Kristlein becomes representative for the former Nazi reintegrated into post-war society. But at the same time, unlike Grass or Böll, Walser does not intend to criticize this mode of behaviour, rather he reports on this fictional, representative figure, variations of whom he has encountered in reality, and leaves the social criticism to the reader. We, in turn, as readers may interpret Gallus Kristlein to be yet another example of political opportunism with National Socialist links.

Halbzeit spans from the morning of June 18, 1957 up to the morning of March 21, 1958.[60] We meet "Onkel" Gallus on two key occasions, and our third major encounter with him is at his death and funeral.[61] Our introduction to the elder Kristlein provides the initial definition of the man's character which changes little in the course of the novel. Onkel Gallus is described to us along with Anselm's other two uncles, Arthur and Paul (pp. 171-75). We learn how Gallus' nose caused him particular grief during the war:

> Diese Hakennase hatte Onkel Gallus in den Jahren zwischen 33 und 45 zuweilen Schwierigkeiten bereitet, weil ganz ungebildete Parteigenossen ihm das als ein semitisches Beimengsel ankreideten. Man hat ihn damals oft und oft lange Beweise führen hören, daß er keine jener häßlich gebogenen Judennase habe, sondern eine zackige, rein arische Hakennase. Bitte: Hakenkreuz, man überlege mal! Das sei ja doch schon eine Art Staatsverbrechen, ein

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[60] Emmel, "Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild,' p. 135.

[61] Martin Walser, Die Anselm Kristlein Trilogie. Erste Band. Halbzeit, suhrkamp taschenbuch 684, 1. Auflage, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981), p. 788. All subsequent quotations from this novel have been taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

> verbum compositum, in dem "Haken" vorkomme, als etwas Semitisches zu brandmarken.(p. 173).

Thus the educated, confirmed National Socialist bitterly and vehemently denies any Jewish connections against the accusations of his "ungebildete Parteigenossen" who obviously are too simple to appreciate a true Aryan when they see one! Here was the man who was indeed an SA-Sturmführer but who dearly wanted to become more than a mere Sturmführer, and

> "(...) zeigte zwar niemandem an, aber fluchte zuhause oft über den Großvater, von dem er diese Nase geerbt hatte und zum ebenso wenig zeitgemäßen Familiennamen auch noch, was doch wirklich hätte vermieden werden können (...) (p. 173).

So as if the nose were not already burden enough for Onkel Gallus, he also had to contend with his name, both of which naturally threatened to impede his professional progress. He found

> (...) diesen penetrant christlichen Vornamen (...), den der Onkel allerdings geschickt verkürzte und sich dann Dr. Gall Kristlein nannte, was die oberflächlich gebildeten Parteigenossen zwar immer noch an Gallier, aber wenigstens nicht mehr an irische, die germanischen Götter bekämpfende Mönche erinnern konnte (pp. 173-74).

But fortunately for Gallus, his nose, and name, the Nazis lost the war, and he could play the victimized German nationalist:

> Er hatte sich tatsächlich benachteiligt gefühlt. Und von dem Gefühl, benachteiligt gewesen zu sein, war es im Sprachgebrauch der Nachkriegszeit nur ein Schrittchen zu dem Gefühl, ein Verfolgter, ein Opfer des Naziregimes zu sein. Und Onkel Gallus sagte es so oft und so laut als möglich, wie schön es doch sei, daß er seine gekrümmte Nase, die er möglicherweise einer semitische Strähne im Stammbaum zu verdanken habe, wieder frei und offen und ohne Angst, deswegen verfolgt zu werden, tragen dürfe (p. 174).

Thus Gallus' story and argumentation is radically revised to his benefit. A man who abhorred Jews as a faithful Party-man

should, now suggests the possibility that he, too, may have some Jewish blood coursing through those once fiercely Aryan veins. Of course, his new story was to act as an antidote to his role within the SA, so that he might begin life afresh in whatever new state was to arise from the ashes. He could be confident and convinced of his new role. Thus an ambitious man who never rose high enough in the NS-machine to suit his desires, who cursed his own father for this, now might satisfy his ambitions. Gallus finds himself a position as rector of a secondary school, and once again becomes politically active within the leading party of the day. The reader may cringe at the irony:

> So wurde Onkel Gallus bei der Grundlegung der neuen Ordnung einer der Grundsteine. Nach kurzer beruflicher und politischer Erholungspause trat er in die christlichste aller zur Verfügung stehenden Parteien ein und wurde, kurz vor seiner Pensionierung, sogar noch kommissarischer Rektor der Oberschule, die jetzt wieder Xaverina-Oberschule hieß (pp. 174-75).

As Heike Doane points out, Onkel Gallus is like all the other once active National Socialists, their "Mitläufer", and even the surviving victims of the novel in that all memory of the NS-era should be submerged. In this way, Walser captures the post-war mood and belief: the Federal Republic shall not be related to the Third Reich.[62]

In the second major encounter with Gallus Kristlein, the reader meets a grumpy, domineering pensioner, a model German citizen who demands (and receives) respect. As master of his

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[62]Heike Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte in Martin Walsers Kristlein-Trilogie: "Halbzeit", "Das Einhorn", "Der Sturz", 1. Auflage, (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978), p. 40.

household, he has become a petty tyrant. He took in Anselm and his mother after Anselm's father, Gallus' brother, committed suicide. Gallus' insistence upon order and impatience with his family is especially underlined when he distributes the responsibility for the eventual ruin of his home among those weaker than himself:

> Ich hätte es verstehen können, wenn er die Schuld geteilt hätte, mir die Hälfte oder auch Zweidrittel, und meiner Mutter den Rest. Er aber multiplizierte die Schuld mit zwei, um jedem von uns den vollen Teil zuschreiben zu können, das war doch zumindest rechnerisch nicht in Ordnung. Zum Glück beteiligten sich an der Zerstörung des Hauses, wie ich oft genug hören konnte, auch die Mietparteien nach Kräften (p. 204).

Nevertheless, Gallus, who fancies himself the intellectual and survivor, would be essentially harmless, except for the frustration and humiliation he causes his brothers, sister-in-law, and nephew. He constantly harps at them, believing he is correct and that things must be done correctly, while his sister-in-law, in the end, argues back until she too relents. This is the man who kept his white enamel nameplate in a drawer for a decade,"(...) weil der Vorname um eine Silbe zu altmodisch gewesen war" (p. 205). But people see him as a figure of authority, to whom they may turn for advice. He does not, nor does anyone, whisper about his NS past; in this new age the war is forgotten and the successful opportunist is integrated. Furthermore, once the status quo has been re-established, it is maintained by all, save Edmund.

In this new order, those who have property believe that they alone are capable of guiding society, while the less-fortunate look to the rich and successful people for guidance. When they compare themselves to the more well-to-do in society, their sense of

insecurity and inferiority is only heightened. For these reasons, the tenants look to their landlord Gallus Kristlein for advice.[63]

We can also understand why Gallus bequeathed his estate not to his sister-in-law, but to Anselm (p. 789). Onkel Arthur never has a chance of receiving the property since he had contradicted Gallus' agricultural theories too often (p. 789). Gallus cannot leave his property to just anyone, though, let alone a woman. Yet he can wisely avoid the depreciation of his estate by leaving it to Anselm:

> Ich habe allen Grund, Gutes über ihn zu sagen, denn er hat sein Haus nicht meiner Mutter, sondern mir vermacht; hat sich aber dafür, feinfühlig wie er war, im Testament bei meiner Mutter förmlich entschuldigt. Vermache er es ihr, so würde vielleicht schon in Kürze eine Vererbung mit Umschreibungen, Gebühren und Erbschaftssteuer notwendig werden (p. 789).

For Gallus, as for others of his generation, one's wealth should remain in the hands of other property-owners, since the "Besitzlosen", are not seen as being reliable, otherwise they would have property themselves. Thus the status quo perpetuates itself.[64]

II 1.5. Concluding Remarks.

In the four authors' approaches to opportunists in relation to National Socialism there are quite different attitudes. On the one extreme is Brecht who differentiated between selfish, unprincipled

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[63] Ibid., p. 24.

[64] Ibid., p. 25.

collaboration with the NSDAP as opposed to the necessary, "principled" opportunism of Schweyk. This second kind allowed the individual to resist, perhaps even sabotage the spread of Nazism in his own small way and yet still survive this era. Brecht does not condemn opportunism provided it is a tool aimed against a tyrant and not a form of self-serving "Mitmacherei" especially by higher officials. As well, Brecht's treatment of opportunism is self-conscious social criticism, and deliberately didactic.

Grass, however, does not see the average individual as an innocent dupe whose life has always been threatened by one tyrant or another. Instead, Grass shows his contempt of the unreflective, self-centred, insecure naiveté of the "Kleinbürger" by portraying two significant petit-bourgeois characters as opportunists. Through them Grass illustrates the folly of a mentality which indeed helped facilitate Hitler's rise to power through their lack of critical social, historical, and political awareness.

Böll's approach to opportunism with regard to National Socialism differs from that of the above two authors as he focuses on socially well-placed persons who act as role models. These opportunists integrate themselves into influential positions in both the society of the Third Reich and of the Federal Republic of Germany with calculated sincerity, and thereby continue the oppression of the less-fortunate. Böll uses such representative types to bring awareness to the selfish, politically motivated abdication of responsibility by the socially and economically powerful persons in German society.

Walser, finally, refuses to commit himself to any kind of social criticism. Rather he allows characters to develop themselves from the seeds of his own observations. The reader, then, is left to extrapolate from the independent text whatever social comment is inherent within it. Ultimately, the phenomenon of political opportunism embodied in the figure of Dr. Gallus Kristlein must be interpreted as an abstract representation of a recurring social and political figure among Walser's observations. The critical reader might therefore infer negative social repercussions as the status quo perpetuates itself aided to some extent by opportunistic behaviour.

II 2. Political Opportunists with No Association to National Socialism or the Second World War.

Two works among the sampled eight works included in this study, contain further examples of political opportunists. Unlike those discussed in the previous section, these opportunistic characters have no ties with either the Second World War or National Socialism. Rather, these figures serve as examples of more general, one might even say abstract political opportunism. We shall concern ourselves in this portion of our discussion with two authors: Günther Grass and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The two plays which will be discussed are Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi and Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand.

II 2.1. Anastasia; Diego, Minister of Justice.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt has become exceedingly well-known for his vehement espousal of the just, the ethical, and the tolerant within modern society. Time and again in his plays, novels, and essays Dürrenmatt persistently decries political and economic oppression fostered by the intolerance inherent in ideology.

While some critics insist upon Dürrenmatt's blackest nihilism, a careful reader may nevertheless discern some glimmer of hope for humanity within his works. Dürrenmatt has never described himself as a nihilist;[65] he has also taken care to correct and ameliorate somewhat the severity of this term which others have applied to him and his literary output: "Das Groteske ist eine der großen Möglichkeiten, genau zu sein. Es kann nicht geleugnet werden, daß diese Kunst die Grausamkeit der Objektivität besitzt, doch ist sie nicht die Kunst der Nihilisten, sondern weit eher der Moralisten (...)."[66] Dürrenmatt does not wish to preach the inevitable cataclysmic ruin of modern society. Instead, he illustrates and reveals through comic and grotesque elements the tragedy caused in part by rampant avarice and injustice.

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[65]Renate Usmiani informs the reader: "Interessanterweise betont Dürrenmatt in Gesprächen und Interviews auch weiterhin, er sei weder Nihilist noch Weltuntergangsprophet und ruft so die von ihm so sehr geliebte Vieldeutigkeit hervor." Renate Usmiani, "Die späten Stücke: Porträt eines Planeten, Der Mitmacher, Die Frist," In: Zu Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk, hrsg. von Armin Arnold, 1. Auflage, (Stuttgart: Klett, 1982), p. 151.

[66]Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Anmerkung zur "Komödie", In: Theater: Schriften und Reden, (Zürich: 1966), p. 137.

Whereas Brecht's didactic method came of the presupposition that the large-scale political, economic, and social inequity and corruption could be alleviated, Dürrenmatt is less optimistic.[67] The world has degenerated into an opaque amalgamation of oppressive Orwellian organizations and regimes, while history has become a chaotic mishmash of unrelated catastrophes.[68]

As a result of this perception of history, Dürrenmatt could not seek to find causes or consolation for National Socialism and other totalitarian political machines within an historical perspective as many émigré authors, Brecht among them, attempted. Indeed, Dürrenmatt does not concern himself with the causes, rationalization or justification for political oppression and corruption in recent history. Rather he creates in his plays allegorical societies in which he mirrors our social, economic, and political injustices but with (comically) grotesque proportions. In this way, he may effectively criticize and moralize without hopelessly offending or alienating the very audience he wishes to instruct. One can see how Brecht consciously veered away from moralizing and portrayed his characters as the meek and oppressed victims who were compelled to be evil against their will, as a result of the social and political conditions. Dürrenmatt, on the other hand, makes his key figures the selfish ones, the oppressors,

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[67]Gerhard P. Knapp, "Dürrenmatt's Physicists as a Turning-Point," In: Play Dürrenmatt, ed. Moshe Lazar, Interplay 3, (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), p. 56.

[68]Ibid.

the ideologues, or the guilt-ridden, as well as the sacrificial lambs.[69]

Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi provides a classic illustration of this abstract, grotesque comedy, in the course of which the author employs two powerful opportunists. Here Dürrenmatt tackles the problems and ramifications of ideology on society. The three main characters each espouse one ideology with which they each hope to transform and save the world.[70] Firstly, Florestan (Paule) Mississippi is the Public Prosecutor of some representative European state. He believes absolutely in Mosaic law and the death penalty, fanatically encouraging the state's enforcement of both. Secondly, Count Bodo von Übelohe-Zabernsee, a doctor, typifies the fiercely devout Christian, who, while believing in good works, is far too naive to be effective practically. He fanatically promotes altruism and humility. Übelohe's greatest love is humanity, but he emerges as the impractical Don Quixote. Finally, there is Frédérick René (Louis) Saint-Claude, the fiercely devout Communist, who is also a professional revolutionary. He, too, adamantly puts forward his own interpretation of justice which is as fierce and unyielding as that of the others, especially Mississippi. Unlike Mississippi, however, Saint-Claude applies the violently sudden

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[69]Ulrich Profitlich, "Dürrenmatt. Der Besuch der alten Dame," In: Die Deutsche Komödie. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart, hrsg. von Walter Hinck, (Düsseldorf: August Bagel Verlag, 1977), p. 333.

[70]Gerwin Marahrens, "Dürrenmatts Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi," In: Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk. hrsg. von Gerhard P. Knapp, 1. Auflage, (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1976), p. 96.

militaristic tools of the revolutionary. He does not even pretend to work within the bounds of the state's legal machinery.

The common link between these three ideologues is Anastasia, who represents "Frau Welt".[71] All three are devoted to her, attempt to exploit her, and are ruined because of her.[72] This Whore of Babylon is aptly described by Diego, the Minister of Justice:

> Du bist ein Tier, aber ich liebe Tiere. Du hast keinen Plan, du lebst nur im Augenblick, wie du deinen Mann verraten hast, verrätst du mich und so fort. Immer wird für dich das, was ist, stärker sein, als das, was war, und was sein wird, wird immer das Heutige besiegen. Niemand kann dich fassen; wer auf dich baut, wird untergehen, und nur wer dich liebt, wie ich dich liebe, wird dich immer besitzen (p. 63).

These two characters, Anastasia and Diego, are pragmatists and opportunists to the end. Ultimately Anastasia succumbs to Mississippi's poison but with a lie on her lips. Diego manages to survive because he relies on nothing but circumstance and himself, consistently exploiting the moment to gain power:

> Der Minister: (...) Während ich,
> Macht begehrend und nichts anderes, die Welt umarme -- [Anastasia hat sich erhoben und geht zum Minister, der sie umfängt.]
> Anastasia: Eine Hure, die unverändert durch den Tod geht (p. 112).

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[71] Ibid., p. 108.

[72] "Unter anderem, denn es geht um das nicht unbedenkliche Schicksal dreier Männer (...) die sich aus verschiedenen Motiven nichts mehr und nichts weniger in den Kopf gesetzt hatten, als die Welt teils zu ändern, teils zu retten, und denen nun das freilich grausame Pech zustieß, mit einer Frau zusammenzukommen (...) die weder zu ändern, noch zu retten war, weil sie nichts als den Augenblick liebte (...)." from Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi. Eine Komödie in zwei Teilen, Neufassung 1980 und ein Drehbuch, Werkausgabe, (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1980), p. 15. All subsequent quotations from this play have been taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

Anastasia, whose name in Greek means "die Auferstandene",[73] poisoned her first husband, and attempts to poison Mississippi and Saint-Claude when their continued existence threatens her own survival. She married Mississippi to avoid a trial for her husband's murder. She used Übelohe to get the poison and became his mistress. She later renounced him once she learned he was no longer in the financial position to help her effect an escape. As well she became Diego's mistress and hoped to use this liaison for security in the event of a revolutionary victory. But it is Saint-Claude who informs her of the fundamental error in her plan. She, as an opportunist, must see that Diego, himself a political opportunist, could never politically afford to be linked with her:

> Anastasia: Der Ministerpräsident ist mein Freund.
> Saint-Claude: In seiner Position dürfte eine Verbindung mit einer Giftmischerin für ihn wohl kaum mehr opportun sein.
> Anastasia: Er weiß es nicht.
> Saint-Claude: Ich klärte ihn auf.
> Anastasia: Liebenswürdig.
> Saint-Claude: Der einzige Politiker, der sich den Luxus leisten kann, dich auszuhalten, bin ich (p. 99).

Indeed Anastasia had also become Saint-Claude's mistress to assure herself of protection from him as Saint-Claude later reveals to the audience:

> Saint-Claude: Ich setzte dich nur deiner Bestimmung gemäß ein. Du bist meine Geliebte geworden, um dich auch gegen unsere Seite zu sichern, und ich habe dich zu meiner Geliebten gemacht, um deiner Fähigkeiten sicher zu werden. (...) Was bist du? Ein Weib, dessen Männerverbrauch ungeheuer ist (p. 98).

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[73]Marahrens, "DÜrrenmatts Die Ehe," p. 96.

While Anastasia is prepared to prostitute herself as a means of security against ideological fall-out, she has no intention of "lowering" herself to become a madam in Saint-Claude's bordello. She will not voluntarily aid his pursuit of Justice because she heeds only her own wishes, doing whatever is necessary to achieve the most favorable lifestyle with the least personal cost to herself. Her brand of prostitution is designed to protect her from those three men and their ideologies. She plays one against the other confident in their devotion and, therefore, certain of her continued protection. Only Diego does not commit himself to her. Although her lover, he relies solely upon himself, interested in his own political future. Thus only the pragmatic opportunist like Diego may control the opportunistic Anastasia because he does not base his values upon the strength of her love which would in turn spell his ruin. Anastasia is completely changeable and amoral, and lies freely to suit the situation.[74]

When Übelohe (p. 85), then Mississippi (p. 110), ground their ideological beliefs on Anastasia's insincerity, then the doom of the man is an inevitable outcome of the destruction of his ideological base. For example, even when Saint-Claude attempts to exploit this opportunist for his own ideological purposes, he meets with despair. Consequently, Anastasia, too, is destroyed since she foolishly believed that she could also rely on a pragmatist to the end. As Diego, now the Prime Minister, declares at the end of the play: he is able to embrace the world because he desires nothing

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[74] Ibid., p. 108.

but power (p. 112). He is the only one who survives the chaos and carnage of the ideologies because he depends upon no one, professes no single ideology, but rather adapts himself and his loyalties to every situation to appease his lust for power. As Jennifer Michaels highlights for the reader: Diego survives because for Dürrenmatt such types will always triumph in our society.[75]

The decisive factor in understanding the opportunists Anastasia and Diego in the abstract is not to consider them utterly demonic beings and, therefore, more morally perverted than either Mississippi or Saint-Claude. One must discern that the author's intent is not to examine mere shades of political and ethical corruption. Rather we are shown how ideologies will necessarily run aground when they presume to control and manipulate the notoriously fickle and ruthless "Frau Welt". Of course, she too may be enslaved if society's political workings persist in their own unpredictable fickleness; society demands some constancy in justice and morality. But ideologically enforced perceptions of "Justice", although abundant, are ultimately short-lived and unworkable. Philanthropy and altruism will fall victim first to an ideology. Dürrenmatt illustrates through this grotesque comedy that society's chances of being just and moral, which are already slim indeed due to society's own unpredictable nature, deteriorate rapidly once political corruption (illustrated here by opportunism) becomes commonplace:

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[75]Jennifer E. Michaels, "Vom Romulus zum Engel, (Romulus der Große, Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi, Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon)," In: Zu Friedrich Dürrenmatt, p. 64.

> Der Minister: Auf dem Sofa meines neuen Arbeitszimmers liegend -- der alte Ministerpräsident liegt bereits im Sanatorium --, zerreisse ich die Photographie eines eingeschumuggelten Agenten und werfe die Fetzen ins Feuer. (...) Als ob eine Revolution gegen einen Einzelnen zu fürchten wäre. Den Einzelnen opfert man, und die Bagage, die sich Gesellschaft nennt, bleibt erhalten. Eine bewährte Regel, das Biest ist nicht umzubringen, setzen wir auf das Biest, und wir werden ewig oben sitzen (pp. 78-79).

II 2.2. Chef.

Günther Grass once again approaches the topic of political opportunism in Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand. In this work, though, he examines an intellectual and artist who holds the working class in contempt while presumably creating theatre on their behalf. The play revolves around the workers' uprising in East Berlin of June 17th, 1953 which did not have the support of the East German intelligentsia. A spontaneous and unorganized protest, the rebellion was quickly quashed by the Russian tanks. Grass looks at the events of the uprising as they affect a rehearsal of a new Coriolanus-adaptation. The writer-director of the adaptation has been modelled on Bertolt Brecht and reveals some of Grass' own reservations about Brecht the Communist advocate versus the prestigious artist-intellectual. The "Chef" is a privileged thinker who is suddenly faced with the real-life struggle of the ordinary "Arbeiter". The theatre director is forced to choose between fighting for the right of the proletariat through art or through assertive action:

> Erwin: Doch auch bei dir siegte der ästhetische Standpunkt.
> Chef: Schon Marx weist darauf hin.

> Erwin: Und Lenin schlägt vor, die Revolution wie Kunst zu betreiben.
> Chef: Also: Lehrstück machen. Publikum klüger machen! Hier! Mit Revolution, wie macht man keine. - Oder Neues von heute? Den Coriolan liegen lassen? - Oder mal wieder Gedichte? Kurze. Private. Kommen Bäume drin vor. Silberpappeln womöglich. [12]

Brecht, himself reworking Shakespeare's Coriolanus,[13] played a opportunistic part in the uprising, having sent a letter on June 17, 1953 to the SED governing body to express his concern about the uprising as well as to offer the government his support:

> Die Geschichte wird der revolutionären Ungeduld der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands ihren Respekt zollen. Die große Aussprache mit den Massen über das Tempo des sozialistischen Aufbaus wird zu einer Sichtung und Sicherung der sozialistischen Errungenschaften führen. Es ist mir ein Bedürfnis, Ihnen in diesem Augenblick meine Verbundenheit mit der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands auszusprechen. Ihr Brecht.[14]

Brecht has been attacked as the cynical opportunist who allowed his art to take precedence over ideology while at the same time reaping the benefits of serving the Eastern State.[15] For example it is uncertain whether Brecht ever joined the SED; he never became an East German citizen; he maintained a West German publisher; and he

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[12]Günther Grass, Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand. Ein Deutsches Trauerspiel, (Neuwied und Berlin: Luchterhand, 1966), p. 15. All subsequent quotations from this novel have been taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

[13]Rainer Hartmann, "Günther Grass. Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand. Ein deutsches Trauerspiel," In: Tribune. Zeitschrift zum Verständnis des Judenproblems, (1966), p. 2067.

[14]Thomas K. Brown, "Die Plebejer and Brecht: An Interview with Günther Grass," In: Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht, deutsche Sprache und Literatur, 65 (1973), p. 6.

[15]James Redmond, "Günther Grass and 'Der Fall Brecht'," In: Modern Language Quarterly, 32 (1971), p. 6.

never wrote the required propaganda play extolling life in the East. Furthermore, the Soviet Union refused to distribute his literary output for many years because they deemed it dangerous.[16]

The Chef is a theoretician whose goal is to collect the material[17] which will make his play more convincing and prove his thesis that the plebeians will win the uprising.[18] He deftly manages to fob off both the advances of the State and the people to support and address publicly their respective positions. For example, when he does finally write an appeal on behalf of the workers, it is ambiguous and, therefore, ineffective. Initially he had denounced the revolt as hopelessly disorganized. He fires practical, tactical questions at the workers to prove his point, aware that they had not had the foresight to assuage the fears of their own and the Soviet governments:

> (...) Habt ihr den Rundfunk schon besetzt?
> Den Generalstreik ausgerufen?
> Ist man vor Westagenten sicher?
> Was treibt die Vopo? Schaut sie weg?
> Gabt ihr der Sowjetmacht Gewähr,
> daß es beim Sozialismus bleibt?
> Und wenn nun Panzerwagen kommen?
> Fast glaube ich, ihr kennt den Typ. (p. 29).

Then with the arrogance of the calm, rational intellectual, he says

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[16]Ibid., p. 393.

[17]Josef Mühlberger, "Bert Brecht als opportunistischer Modellfall. Zur Wiener Erstaufführung der Plebejer von Grass," In: Österreichisches Forschungsinstitut für Wirtschaft und Politik. Berichte und Informationen, 21 (1966), p. 15.

[18]Lore Metzger, "Günther Grass's Rehearsal Play," In: Contemporary Literature, 14 (1973), p. 200.

about the workers: "Ich hasse nun einmal Revolutionäre, die sich scheuen, den Rasen zu betreten" (p. 50).

The Chef is interested in the uprising only insofar as it will help his art. For this reason, he tapes the workers in the rehearsal, convinced that the commotion outside is merely a doomed fiasco:

> Wir und das Band wollen zuhören, wie unüblich sie heute aufmarschieren und wie anders die Gesichte der Aufmarschierenden sind, damit wir aus ihren Gesichtern lernen" (p. 17-18).

Even when the workers hurl abuse at Chef for his total lack of effort on their behalf, he continues the tape. Then he corrects their spontaneous "mistakes" when he replays the recording. The Chef mocks them in their emotion and spontaneity only to be swept, too late, into their camp by the hairdresser's passionate speech. The revolt is, indeed, quelled as the gloating intellectual had earlier anticipated; ironically, it ended before the Chef's emotional decision could have any tangible effect.

The reader may, therefore, see how the failure of an intellectual to engage himself in the political action of those he presumably serves makes a hopeless situation even more pathetic. Not only do the Chef's actions reveal his hypocracy as an artist-figure,[19] but also his cowardice. The Chef will do nothing to jeopardize the security and privilege he enjoys individually, nor whatever other benefits he and his company may reap:

Podulla: Litthenner und ich stehen eindeutig auf der

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[19]Redmond, "Grass and 'Der Fall Brecht'", p. 388.

> Seite des Volkes. Mehr noch: Dank Ihrer Anleitung unterhalten wir ein Theater für die Arbeiterklasse.
> Chef: Seid korrekt! Unterhalten tut es wohl unsere Regierung.
> Podulla: Die eine Regierung der Arbeiterklasse ist.
> Chef: Ihr habt die Bauern vergessen und solltet Selbstkritik üben; bedenkt, man versprach uns ein neues Haus.
> Podulla: Auf Wunsch also: Die demnach die Regierung des ersten deutschen Arbeiter- und Bauernstaates ist.
> Chef: Dennoch, auch auf versprochener Drehbühne wird mein Theater kein Bauerntheater werden (pp. 13-14).

As an artist and an intellectual, the Chef personifies the man who adheres to Party-doctrine or ideology as long as it does not interfere with his art. At the same time, he will not sully his name and position with the State by actually climbing on the barricades and physically supporting the cause of those in whose name he presumes to create his plays. Both the workers and the State believe that if they can persuade the Chef to speak for their side, then their opposing number will take heed and relent. This testifies to the fact that both parties believe from the outset that the Chef and his work express their respective views. Thus the Chef's adroit manoeuvering between the two camps politically and artistically illustrates his lack of firm commitment to either one side or the other. He mocks the plebeians but records their speeches, while he ignores the government but will accept a revolving stage.

Were the Chef to champion the cause of the losing side, it would spell his political and artistic ruin. Yet at the same time his recalcitrance belies his own preference for rational thought in political and dramaturgical theory to overt political action. As a result his plays and theory lose some of their force, since he,

himself, cannot put into practice that which he hopes to teach: commitment to the revolution of the people.

Finally, then, one sees how Grass has employed an opportunistic artist-figure to reveal the political isolation of the intelligentsia from the workers and the resulting hardship.[20] If an artist is to make a political statement through his art, in order to persuade people or goad them into action, then he should also be willing to transform his own abstract beliefs into concrete political action.

II 2.3. Concluding Remarks.

German-speaking authors did not find it necessary to concentrate solely upon the Third Reich, and Nazism generally, in order to disclose elements of political opportunism. Encapsulated within the greater context of Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand and Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi is an incisive comment upon non-committal "Mitmacherei".

Firstly, one sees that the Chef betrays his personal self-interest regarding his need to produce theatre which educates the masses while working in a political atmosphere which discourages stimulative originality. At the same time, his intellectualism and acquired prestige in that relatively repressive "Arbeiter" society have dulled his perceptions of the workers' plight. The Chef has become far too rational and jaded in his approach to government and working-class. He denies himself emotional empathy with either

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[20] Brown, "Die Plebejer and Brecht," p. 6.

side in order to appease both. Indeed, he relies on government sanction and public praise, so that his professional and ethical responsibility as a self-avowed intellectual for the working-class by locking himself in an ivory tower of self-serving theatre. By politically straddling the fence, he reveals that he wants only to save himself and his theatre.

Thus the effect of the Chef's political opportunism is needless loss of life and greater oppression for the already dissatisfied masses. The Chef's aid to those he claims to support comes so late as to be merely academic, and not at all tangible. Be it during the Second World War or political upheaval in a single nation, Grass denounces those who withhold the assistance which is theirs to offer, and which they profess to offer to those who are oppressed.

Secondly, Dürrenmatt illustrates on a far higher allegorical level than Grass the dangers for society politically when ideology and opportunism clash. The hazards inherent in ideology need not be discussed here, rather one must consider the potential turmoil caused by unabashed pragmatism. While the ideologies eventually meet with doom because of their oppressive, pseudo-scientific nature and their fragile foundation in the real world, the opportunist continually resurrects himself.

Both Anastasia and Diego have no moral scruples or fixed political or social values to prevent their constant shifts in loyalties. Ultimately each is loyal only to himself. The "Frau Welt" figure is destroyed by the wrathful repercussions of doomed

ideologies. However, the one in society who glibly pays lip-service to whichever political, economic or social belief has the greater power base, regardless of its ethical or political legitimacy, simply to achieve his personal goals is to be feared as much as the ideologue. This opportunist, this political chameleon cares not at all for society's needs; instead he serves only himself and may not be trusted under any circumstances. This is true of Anastasia and especially of Diego. Dürrenmatt's warning to society is designed for us not simply to be on guard against ideologies, but to be aware of the less obvious, but equally dangerous opportunist.

III Economic Opportunists.

III 1. Introduction.

This third chapter will concentrate on three works in which one finds examples of economic opportunists. The first work is Halbzeit by Martin Walser. The protagonist in this novel, Anselm Kristlein, will be examined. The other two works to be discussed in this chapter, Der Besuch der alten Dame and Der Mitmacher, are by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. All the characters in this chapter resort to economic opportunism as a result of their desire to attain the security and social standing that accompanies wealth.

III 2. Anselm Kristlein.

The first character to be analyzed in this chapter on economic opportunists is Anselm Kristlein from the novel Halbzeit. This section will consist of four subsections: (1) "Mimikry" and its role in the novel, and its specific application to Anselm; (2) Anselm's role as a "Vertreter" and his success within a Darwinian economic system; (3) Anselm's relationships with two women in the context of his "Anpassung"; (4) the significance of Anselm Kristlein's illnesses and fatalism in light of observations made in the previous sections.

III 2.1. Anselm and Mimicry.

The first chapter has the startling heading "Mimikry". Critics rightly consider this chapter title essential to understanding not only Anselm's occasionally foolish behaviour, but

also the nature of society fashioned by the Economic Miracle of the early 1950s in the Federal Republic of Germany. The novel begins with a quotation from Adolf Portmann discussing the discovery of the scientific phenomenon of mimicry:

> Der englische Forscher Henry Walter Bates (1825-1892), der elf Jahre in den Urwäldern des Amazonasgebietes gelebt hat, war der erste, der die Tatsache der Mimikry in ihrer Eigenart hervorgehoben hat. Ihm fiel auf, daß unter Faltern, die man damals alle Heliconiden nannte, auch Arten einer ganz verschiedenen Schmetterlingsgruppe flogen, die unseren Weißlingen nahestehen. Diese Fremdlinge, z.B. Arten der Gattung Reptalis, glichen den Geliconiden auffällig, ihren nächsten Verwandten, den Weißlingen, waren sie aber ganz unähnlich.[1]

Walser prepares his reader from the outset for the unceasing role-playing of the protagonist. Furthermore, Walser qualifies and justifies this role-playing. We are not encountering a man who avoids reality and all its unpleasantness by living in a fantasy world. Instead, we have a man who escapes destruction by consciously disguising his true form. Not only does he mimic people's behaviour that is completely foreign to him, but he must do this to escape predators in the marketplace. The defense mechanism which we expect among the lower orders of the animal kingdom appears incongruous in "homo sapiens". However, the reason for this evolutionary regression is that the society in which Anselm Kristlein finds himself is a tremendously competitive one. Survival requires exploiting elaborate defenses. Yet by

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[1]Martin Walser, Die Anselm Kristlein Trilogie. Erste Band. Halbzeit, suhrkamp taschenbuch 684, 1. Auflage, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981), p. 9. All subsequent quotations from this novel will have page numbers indicated in parentheses within the text.

introducing the phenomenon of mimicry, Walser illustrates man's having been reduced to an animal of instinct. This animal attempts survival in an ecosystem where the consumer dollar is the food, but where the competition for the food is tremendous indeed.

The one complexity in the human ecosystem is that man believes he requires more than he needs. The society which evolved from the Economic Miracle demands the individual have not merely the necessities, but all the amenities as well. One must not simply survive, one must do well. For as the fate of Anselm's father indicates, the very existence of the organism hinges upon its economic success.

Anselm adapts himself to the social norms of the Federal Republic of Germany. Any form of resistance to society's economic and political dictates is futile since it would spell certain personal disaster.[2] Individual desires must always be subordinated in favour of the universalized social expectations if the subject wishes for any degree of personal success[3] economically or socially in the impersonal, universalizing society. One may note, for example, that allusions to Anselm's appearance are rare, since personal definition, indeed individuality are denied the individual in this society.[4] Furthermore, the role-playing eventually consumes

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[2]Emmel, "Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild," p. 140.

[3]K.S. Parkes, "An All-German Dilemma: Some Notes on the Presentation of the Individual and Society in Martin Walser's Halbzeit and Christa Wolf's Nachdenken über Christa T." In: German Life and Letters, 28 (1974-75), p. 59.

[4]Ibid., p. 61.

Anselm entirely, because he realizes personal advancement lies in presenting whichever personality is suitable at a given time. While he is incapable of enforcing any order on his environment,[5] except that which has been universally sanctioned by the rigorous social and economic order, he may instead organize his life through role-playing, i.e. he seeks to portray for other specific individuals the character which will coincide with their probable interpretation of the social norms. Thus Anselm adapts and promotes himself forever, whether in personal or business relationships, so as to gain everyone's favour, thereby repressing his individuality and subjectivity. For Anselm this method seems the only way to achieve personal advancement economically and socially (and therefore politically) in a universalized, success-oriented, money-hungry social order. This is the order which was engendered by the "Wirschaftswunder".

The danger with being a successful mimic is that it can eventually dominate one's life to the exclusion of one's own individual essence. One's own personal development may be curtailed. Normally, a character is judged according to the definition he has given his own personality. A fully developed set of character traits is expected. But a major criticism is warranted of this society which denies and stunts strength of character.[6] There is no longer a standard against which to evaluate behaviour. Respect is awarded not to those who maintain unshakable principles, but rather

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Nägele, "Die Gesellschaft im Spiegel des Subjekts," p. 321.

to those who are successful economically. In short, the greater one's wealth, the "better" the person: such is the inversion of ethics. As we saw with Gallus Kristlein, and we shall discover in Anselm and Dr. Fuchs, the more efficiently one can adapt one's behaviour and principles, the greater that person's chances for success and, subsequently, respect. Anselm shows himself to be fully entrenched in this code of adaptability of the "Wirtschaftsgesellschaft", when he asks: "Aber war nicht jede Rolle mehr als eine Rolle?" (p. 119). His role-play gives him success with the wealthy Frantzkes, because he is adept at the party chit-chat and drole stories. Anselm is very aware of his strengths and exploits them while casting his weaknesses in shadow. Since argumentation is not his forte, but mediation is, Anselm will always attempt to avoid confrontation, submerging his resentment and waiting for renewed calm before trying to score points. Soon the role and the person become interchangeable.[7]

Hildegard Emmel makes an important point regarding Anselm's dislike for engaging in any form of overt combat as a form of defense and passive attack:

> Bei Auseinandersetzungen ist die vorher festgelegte Rolle die Waffe, mit der er sich verteidigt, um seinen Willen durchzusetzen. Er kämpft nicht offen für eine Sache, er behauptet nicht einen Standpunkt, sondern treibt ein Spiel, das sich der Lüge bedient und hinter dem er seine Absicht verbirgt. So kann der andere ihn nicht treffen, doch sind auch Klärung und Übereinkunft schwer möglich.[8]

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[7]Emmel, "Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild," pp. 152-53.

[8]Ibid., p. 150.

Hildegard Emmel gives as examples Anselm's attempt to convince Alissa that he should attend Josef-Heinrich's engagement party, and also his parting from Gaby. In the end truth can no longer be distinguished from lies, since the liar has convinced himself of the validity of his falsehoods.[9] The lies threaten to become Anselm's only reality. Ultimately, Anselm becomes an "Anti-Charakter" who typifies the way individual members of the "Wirtschaftsgesellschaft" must always react to given situations according to rules by society in order to win in the money-game.[10] In this society, one is controlled by external stimuli.[11]

The mimicry itself is not the grave offence, rather it is the fact that there exists such a tremendous discrepancy between those values which are postulated as desirable according to society's dictates, and those which are demanded in everyday life by the individual.[12] The role played in public may differ greatly from one played in private. One's relationship to one's family and to society verges on the schizophrenic.

While Anselm freely documents his own opportunism and techniques of mimicry, he is incapable of understanding their implications. He is unaware that his attitudes and behaviour arose directly as a result of the social and economic climate of post-war

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Reinhold, "Erfahrung und Realismus," p. 268.

[11] Parkes, "An All-German Dilemma," p. 63.

[12] Heike Doane, "Zur Intensivierung der politischen Thematik in Martin Walsers Kristlein-Trilogie," In: Weimarer Beiträge, 30, (1984), p. 1846.

Germany. Indeed, the more successful Anselm becomes, the more his perspective narrows.[13] He always desires those things which society deems are important because he measures his own worth by how others view him. Thus he desperately seeks material and social worth. He will do, buy, or sell virtually anything that will capture the notice and favour of those who are already successful. Anselm is well aware that capturing their approval will facilitate his entrance into fashionable society.

Of course Anselm allows his own desires to be molded by external forces because of his naiveté and personal uncertainty. As he narrates the novel, he does not criticize, since he is incapable of viewing society critically.[14] But while society has based its values upon an economy and not morality, Anselm carries some shreds of morality with him. For every lie and for every unkindness which he alone is to blame, Anselm seeks justification and rationalization in his concept of Fate.[15] Yet the role-playing has evolved into Anselm's identity. While it allows the possibility of escape from the limitations of his own stunted individuality and negligible social position, it nevertheless chains him, precluding any escape into his own identity from his public and private responsibilities.[16]

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[13] Ibid., p. 1850.

[14] Ibid., p. 1847.

[15] Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte, p. 23.

[16] Thomas Beckermann, "Epilog auf eine Romanform. Martin Walsers Roman Halbzeit. Mit einer kurzen Weiterführung, die Romane Das Einhorn und Der Sturz betreffend," In: Martin Walser, hrsg. von

III 2.2. Anselm's Role as "Vertreter".

> Es gibt also keinen Beruf, der einem Menschen das Gefühl seiner eigenen Überflüssigkeit so aufdringlich klarmachen könnte, wie der des Vertreters. Das hat mir diesen Beruf sympathisch gemacht (...). Andererseits kann der Vertreter sich sagen, daß ohne ihn diese Art von Wirtschaft nicht mehr funktionieren würde; da mehr produziert wird als gebraucht wird, ist das wichtiger als das Produzieren.[17]

The economy portrayed in Halbzeit demands the survival of the fittest. The weak, meek, stolid members of society will never triumph over their strong, fast-talking, quick-thinking counterparts. No apology is made for this brand of Darwinian economics. All accept it and abide by it; the economic order which results finds its own moral and ethical justification in Darwin, albeit superficially.[18] Those who fail, or have not the stamina to compete, resign from the battle: Anselm's father is an example.

Anselm, on the other hand, is fit. After he had left university, he became a sales representative like his father. But Anselm will go to far greater lengths to get a sale. In that case the moral principles of a religious upbringing must necessarily be submerged. It is Anselm's duty and his life's work to sell whatever goods are produced by the system, regardless of their usefulness. Later Anselm achieves the position of advertising

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Klaus Siblewski, suhrkamp taschenbuch 2003, 1. Auflage, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981), p. 78.

[17]Horst Bienek, Werkstattgespräche mit Schriftstellern. (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1962), p. 195.

[18]Doane, "Zur Intensivierung," p. 1842.

executive. Nevertheless, he must still peddle to the public all the unnecessary goods the market economy creates in the continual attempt to perpetuate the system. Quality of merchandise is irrelevant; the quantity of sales is paramount. Naturally both these careers were deliberately chosen by the author in order to portray Anselm as a "functional element" of the capitalist machine.[19]

Even friends and business-partners may deceive each other in order to get ahead in the business world. Ultimately whatever action is most expedient to making the greatest amount of money with the least personal expenditure is considered "fair" in this heated economic environment. Anselm's relationship to Moser is an example of this freewheeling behaviour. Moser, "der Schurke", deprives Anselm of his job twice in the name of business, only to be deceived later by Anselm.[20] Loyalty, be it to one's subordinate or to one's mentor, is an emotion few businessmen can afford in view of the immense competition for the consumer's money. Anselm will not offer loyalty, but he carries enough of his moral baggage of youth to offer his services at least in good faith in business or friendship: "Treu bin ich nicht, aber wer mich hält, den halte auch ich" (p. 432). Nonetheless Anselm does not shrink from deception, as we discover from his exploits as an "official" with the "Gesundheitsministerium" (pp. 44-45).

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[19]Reinhold, "Erfahrung und Realismus," p. 268.

[20]The page references in the text dealing with the Moser/Kristlein business association are (among others): pp. 49, 96, 158.

> Wer mich übrigens wegen der nun folgenden Geständnisse noch gerichtlich belangen möchte, dem darf ich gleich mitteilen, daß diese milde Art des Betrugs, deren ich mich, wenn man es schroff und unfreundlich formulieren will, damals schuldig machte, inzwischen schon der Verjährung verfallen ist. Tempus edax rerum, tja (p. 45)!

The established white-collar businessmen are able and willing to deceive as well, but with far less fear of getting caught and with less penalty than their counterparts, the salesmen, face. Anselm complains of the differences:

> Bei uns war man sanfter, ein Verbrechen in den oberen Rängen war immer nur ein Skandal; wenn ein Direktor im Ausland eine Firma gründete, unter einem fremden Namen natürlich, gewissermaßen pseudonym, wenn er dorthin die Produkte der Firma, der er im Inland vorstand, zu lächerlichen Preisen verkaufte, sich so auf Kosten seiner Aktionäre und aller Steuerzahler rasch ein Riesenvermögen ergaunerte, dann war das bloß ein Skandal. (...) Ein Syndikus ist eben kein Komplice, sondern ein Fachmann. Ja, wenn mein Zeigefinger nicht so staubig wäre (...), würde ich ihn gerne auf manche white collar legen, aber ich halt ihn besser tief im Hosensack und gebe endlich zu, daß es der Ärger über den Paragraphen 263 ist, der aus mir spricht. Betrugsparagraph! Ein Wort, daß so häßlich klingt wie Rabenschrei und Marschtritt. Für uns gemacht. Verbrechen nennt man's bei uns (...). (p. 48).

The terminology differs radically for the same kind of deception perpetrated by different classes. Anselm deplores this truth, but in this system industry and power are inexorably intertwined. At the same time, Anselm illustrates how dependent upon this system and its methods he is, by his ultimate resignation towards the injustices.

Anselm's own behaviour as a struggling salesman and later as a comfortable executive promotes the economically-founded class system which this entire economic system fosters. One does not

fight the system; instead one complies with its stipulations and inequities and fights one's friends and associates.[21]

Anselm joins forces with friends as the "Strohmann"[22] to help obtain the advertising campaign from the Frantzke firm. His rise here is quick and painless thanks to his uncanny ability to adapt himself and present the personality traits which appeal to his superiors. This capacity to explcit others' expectations affords him more success than he could have hoped. He is sent to New York for a special course in "künstliche Produktalterung" (p. 745), because

> (...) Pawel spürte wahrscheinlich, daß Anselm die Gabe hatte, die Hinfälligkeit der schönsten Dinge kraß zu empfinden und zu propagieren, deshalb sollte Anselm der erste psychologische Verschrottungsspezialist der deutschen Filiale werden, deshalb sollte Anselm ins Stammhaus, ins Stammland reisen und bei denen lernen, die darin schon Meister waren" (p. 746).

In this cut-throat economic market advertising becomes vital, not only to seduce the consumer, but to manipulate his desires consciously in order to steer him away from the competition. As the consumer becomes more sophisticated, so too must the advertisements, until the advertiser must improve his ad gimmick at

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[21]Heike Doane argues: "Wie dort (In Ehen in Philippsburg) wird diese Ordnung von der Bevölkerung als unabänderlich hingenommen: ihr Ehrgeiz und Fleiß konzentriert sich auf persönliches Weiterkommen innerhalb dieser Ordnung. Eine Änderung des Systems scheint ausgeschlossen." Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte, p. 23.

[22]Ibid., p. 37.

the expense of his product, the quality of the product being inconsequential.[23]

III 2.3. Anselm's relationships with Alissa and Susanne.

As intimated in the previous sections, the demands of the capitalist system of the German "Wirtschaftswunder" pervades Anselm's private life as well. With his relationship to his wife and with his relationship to his friend's eleventh fiancée, the reader has insight into Anselm's incessant roleplay. As well his position as "Verkäufer", indeed the distorted perception of men and women being goods and services to be rendered to the other at low personal cost based on supply and demand is most apparent.

The Kristlein marriage can be described only as problematic. Alissa desires Anselm to remain within her domain of private family life and play the part of the contented family man. She resents how the outside world encroached upon their life together and makes demands upon him, which she considers excessive. It is stated and is obvious that Alissa is an anachronism; she does not belong to this age in which she lives. She is a refugee from another period and wants to possess Anselm entirely: "Ich verstand Alissas Liebe zum alten Zeug, aber manchmal fand ich eben, daß sie sich zu weit einließ mit der Vergangenheit, sie wurde zu perfekt im Umgang mit Historischem" (p. 239). She pesters him with calls to his hotels on the road (p. 154) and of course there are fights:

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[23]Klaus Pezold, Martin Walser, Seine schriftstellerische Entwicklung, 1. Auflage, (Berlin: Rütten und Loeing, 1971), p. 116.

> Einmal, als sie mich bis tief in die Nacht hinein beschworen hatte, doch bitte nicht mehr für mehrere Tage wegzufahren, war sie plötzlich aufgestanden und hätte gesagt: ich geh' jetzt ins Bett, ich werde mir mit jedem Wort noch widerlicher. Aber am nächsten Tag hatte sie weitergemacht. Arme Alissa. Es war schwer, mich von der Welt abzubringen (p. 157).

Again, when Anselm is to leave the family for the special course in the States which will further his career, she is not pleased:

> Für Alissa war es eine herbe Botschaft. Sie gab sich unwohl, hatte nicht einmal mehr Geduld und Kraft, dem Schein einige Glaubhaftigkeit zu verschaffen, weil sie einfach fort, hinaus wollte, erledigt von den scheußlichen Überraschungen dieses Tages, den sie am Morgen für nicht besonders beargwöhnenswert gehalten hatte (p. 746).

Anselm's wife has few misconceptions about her husband. That she is cognizant of his unfaithfulness and role-play, that she understands his weakness is clear in light of her diary.[24] But even she has her roles to play. A woman who smothers her husband with affection and domesticity, she must attempt to hide that she is too principled and too devoted to her marriage to have extra-marital relations: "Ich kann das nicht. Das nimmt mir Anselm übel. Er will nicht, daß ichs tue. Wahrscheinlich nicht. Aber er möchte, daß es mir möglich wäre" (p. 359). She, too, must adapt, but to save a marriage. That she as a woman, fiercely uncomfortable in her economically-dominated society, has great difficulty in maintaining false role-play becomes apparent when the reader discovers she had hoped Anselm would discover and read her diaries. Alissa is compelled to sabotage her role-play and present her true

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[24]Emmel, "Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild," p. 143.

self to her husband. But she has no illusions about her position as Anselm's wife or her place in his affections:

> Ich erzählte ihm von Josef-Heinrichs Antrag. Er hat keinen Instinkt. Seine Liebe ist immer das Ergebnis einer Enquete. Auf einer Insel mit mir allein, und er würde mich hassen. Nachfrage und Angebot entscheiden über meinen Wert (p. 352).

Her attractiveness for Anselm increases proportionately only as others find her attractive. Even Anselm's deepest emotions are controlled by economic theory. Therefore, it is inexplicable to him why Alissa should be offended by receiving another man's unsolicited attentions.

Anselm's attitude to his wife is respectful but deceitful. While she is able to maintain one role and is, therefore, superior to him, he cannot and resents this.[25] He tries to mollify her outrage when he wants to go to Josef-Heinrich's engagement party and when she discovers the affair with Susanne, but Anselm does not apologize for his philandering or role-play.

All Anselm's romantic liaisons correspond to this kind of "market mentality". His pursuit of other women parallels a businessman's acquisition of other businesses in order to increase his own net worth. Anselm is not able to give and receive love freely, enchained as he is by his economic indoctrination and consequent role-play. Having a mistress increases Anselm's sense of self-worth, since it convinces him and others that he is attractive and "a good catch": "Wer kümmerte sich von den zwei Milliarden um mich? Wer außer ein paar Frauen, bestätigte mir, daß

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[25]Beckermann, "Epilog auf eine Romanform," p. 76.

ich auch da war" (p. 359). Indeed Anselm constantly measures his own worth upon external societal standards because he does not possess the inner wealth of the individual but relies on external judgements to provide him with a sense of self.

There is no doubt that Anselm belongs to Alissa. For all the bickering and affairs, he never mentions divorce or separation. Once his affairs become too intimate and constraining, he terminates the relationship. Nonetheless, Anselm resents being domineered by Alissa's sense of domesticity, since he adores the world at large and loves to escape into it. He relies on his role-play both when he is in Alissa's sphere and when he hopes to leave it only temporarily.[26] At the same time, he cannot survive in society without role-play. Thus he feels dreadfully uncomfortable in being the sole object and recipient of Alissa's love. For him to accept her love freely would require that he accept and adhere to one personality as an individual -- a feat far too great for him as he is trained to adapt and change continually. Anselm cannot survive in this society without role-play. He is bound to mimicry which inevitably takes its toll. As we shall learn in the next section, it is the physical strain from Anselm's mimicry which finally secures his position in Alissa's domain.

Anselm's brief relationship with Susanne also runs in accordance with the market laws of supply and demand. Because she is the fiancée of someone else, of a friend who is moderately successful financially, she becomes a more valuable commodity in

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[26] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

Anselm's eyes. As well, Susanne is a Jewess of intriguing origins who has led a remarkable life. This, along with her comparative elusiveness, makes her more of a prize.[27] Once Anselm has made the conquest, however, Susanne ceases to be of interest.[28] Here we may see an example of the blatantly economically orientated nature of Anselm's infatuation with Susanne:

> Der Verkauf hatte begonnen. Anselm hatte den Geländeschrecken überwunden, der Sprung aus dem Sandkasten war geglückt. "The sale I never forgot," unsere 39 Gebote, "Wirtschaft und Werbung" 53/6 aus Inker's Print oder Printer's Ink oder so, ja, 39 Gebote hat unser Moses mitgebracht, wesentlich komplizierter, unsere Religion (...): How to sell tradition. Gebot für Gebot wird Anselm abhaken auf seiner strategischen Gesetztafel. How to sell myself to Susan? "Führen Sie Ihre Ware glaubwürdig vor!" Er war beim dritten Gebot" (p. 698).

Anselm desires to possess Susanne not as a warm, loving, unique woman, but as an object whose worth fluctuates according to her availability. He does not woo her away from Josef-Heinrich in the traditional manner, rather he manipulates his own keen role-playing capabilities and salesmanship. In this way he sells himself to her, as he would sell useless gadgets to a reluctant housewife. For this we can ascertain Anselm's complete lack of self and self-respect. He does not see himself as something desirable in and of itself, but as mere superficial paraphernalia, i.e. another by-product of the capitalist economic machine. This relationship must finally falter like all his other extra-marital

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[27]Parkes, "An All-German Dilemma," p. 60.

[28]Emmel, "Zeiterfahrung und Weltbild," p. 149.

dalliances because Anselm is incapable of maintaining any one of his acquired personas for a protracted period of time.

III 2.4. Anselm's Fatalism and Physical Maladies.

The novel Halbzeit begins and concludes with Anselm suffering from a physical malady. Initially, the reader does not suspect that his illness and surgery were in any way psychosomatically induced. However, when the illness returns, the reader may well suspect the origins of Anselm's physical suffering. We meet him the day after he has been released from hospital. The cycle of role-play resumes. He tries to rebuild his career and sever previous romantic relationships. He then seeks to establish new ones. All this corresponds to his behaviour before this illness as the flashbacks reveal. The mimicry continues without abating. Through his role-play Anselm manages to work his way into the Frantzke fold and finally garners respect for himself in his business and social lives.

One soon realizes that the tremendous effort Anselm puts into his mimicry, in his unceasing drive for survival and then success[29] in society, has its own cost: his health. As Anselm says: "(...) so Redensarten streuen alle umher die einem im Magen liegen und Miezes glühende Faust herlocken einladen auch noch Platz zu nehmen denn in meinem Magen hat die Welt Platz (...)" (p. 889). There is little reason not to assume that following the surgical correction

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[29]Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte, p. 53.

of this second stomach illness, the pattern, now chronic,[30] might well begin anew.

One critic notes how Alissa uses Anselm's weakened state to facilitate his complete, albeit perhaps temporary, integration into her domestic sphere. While she had already attempted to achieve this integration after Anselm's first sickness, she succeeds after his second. Two indications of this are given the reader. Firstly, Anselm acknowledges while in hospital "(...) ich mach ja mit ich mache ja mit drehe mich mit (...)" (p. 889).[31] Secondly, the novel concludes with Alissa as the maternal protector, who "(...) glättete, ohne herzusehen, die Stirn mir mit sicheren Fingern, glättete sie, bis sie, ganz glatt, genügend glatt war" (p. 892).

Earlier reference was made to "Miezes glühende Faust". One must mind this remark in the context of Anselm's perception of reality. Anselm does not attribute the cause of his illness to anything but the "Mieze". Throughout the novel, references to the "Mieze" are numerous. One conjures the apt image of Anselm's supreme being as a cat which bats the world about as if it were a mere ball. Anselm, correspondingly, believes he has no control over his life b't can only passively react to whatever Fate (the "graue Mieze") brings him, be it good or bad.

Fatalism allows Anselm to suspend himself of the responsibility for his actions which are, in part, directed by

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[30]Doane, "Zur Intensivierung," p. 1845.

[31]Beckermann, "Epilog auf eine Romanform," p. 80.

economic necessity. He transfers the result of his societal conditioning to a supreme being who allows injustice, and changes the course of one's life at will. Anselm does not reflect critically upon either the actual causes of his present social mentality or on his imposed function within the social unit. He, along with the other characters, are thus kept blind to the responsibility which they as functioning members of society make. Thus they perpetuate their blindness.[32] Moreover, such a lack of critical reflection is engendered and further perpetuated by the missing individuality throughout the hierarchical social structure. All this is the necessary outcome for the capitalist economic machine to continue functioning at full capacity. Once people question the system and assume responsibility for their deeds, they require a sense of self, or identity, which may in turn foster a rejection of the system and its inherent injustices. For example, we saw how Anselm was aware of the inequity between the penalties for white collar crime versus the crimes covered in the "Betrugsparagraph" 263; however, he is not prepared to voice his displeasure and challenge the system. Those occasional individuals who balk at the conditions within the system, for example Alissa and Edmund, are helpless to effect real change, since most people are too apathetic or too accustomed to driving themselves towards tangible, material, and monetary goals. Therefore, the frustration and resentment created by the inherent injustices within this economic social system are harmlessly deflected by society's

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[32]Reinhold, "Erfahrung und Realismus," p. 276.

members towards other forces, real or imaginary, as in the case of the "graue Mieze", over which they may honestly claim to have no control.

III 3. Die Güllener.

The next two sections of this chapter on economic opportunism will inquire into two plays by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Both of these have opportunism as an essential theme, providing the foundation for many of the characters' development. Der Besuch der alten Dame (1956) is perhaps Dürrenmatt's best known comedy. It has been the subject of much literary criticism, as scholars seek to make sense of its complex and multi-facetted nature. Perhaps one of the aptest summarizations of any critic is that of Gerhard Knapp who says that Der Besuch is "the author's verdict on capitalism".[33] Indeed the purpose of the following discussion is to examine the effects of the capitalist economic mind-set on the inhabitants of Güllen. More specifically, we shall determine the onset and development of economic opportunism within the community.

One must realize that, as with Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi, this play is allegorical. Dürrenmatt refers to Güllen as a "Kleinstadt"[34] somewhere in Europe. The time is given as "Gegenwart" (p. 12). With such a setting the author may imply that

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[33]Knapp, Play Dürrenmatt, p. 59.

[34]Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Der Besuch der alten Dame. Eine tragische Komödie. Neufassung, (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1980), p. 12. All subsequent quotations from this play will have page numbers indicated in parentheses within the text.

while all the events in this play take place in Güllen, they could well occur in one's own town. Thus "the moral paralysis of a totally deformed society"[35] becomes universally applicable.

Within this comedy, Dürrenmatt portrays and chastises a society bereft of true individuals, where the new distorted morality and life-style of the "Wirtschaftswunder" have tragic repercussions.[36] In fact Dürrenmatt is making a thinly veiled attack on the decline of moral responsibility which resulted from the dramatic increase of economic prosperity following the near-bankrupt state of the German economy after 1945.

The story of Güllen parallels this situation in post-war Germany: the town hopes to evoke the benevolence of a wealthy benefactor in order to rejuvenate its dying economy. In the play the crucial stipulation of Claire Zachanassian, i.e. the murder of Ill in return for one billion Marks, precipitates a tremendous behavioural change in the town's residents. The resulting mock trial of Ill is accompanied by the citizens' hypocracy, opportunism and self-deception. Only Ill manages to "re-establish (...) moral integrity and regain (...) self-respect."[37]

The townspeople are a homogeneous group completely lacking individuality. In the opening scene, for example, the first four

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[35]Edward Mcdonald, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt's The Visit: Comedy or Tragedy? Avant-Garde or Traditional Theater?" In: Maske und Kothurn: Internationale Beiträge zur Theaterwissenschaft, 23 (1977), p. 131.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Gerwin Marahrens, "'(..) The Universal Escapes My Grasp': Friedrich Dürrenmatt and the 'Universal'", In: Play Dürrenmatt. p. 171.

characters are not given names. These townsmen are able to finish each others' sentences and repeat each others' remarks.[38] One critic argues that the chant-like quality of such speeches in the play conjures the image "of a collective acting out of social ritual (...). They are faceless types representing the community."[39] This scene repeats itself in the second act when four nameless citizens are among the customers buying high quality merchandise on credit. While they buy whole milk, white bread, and chocolate when still without money, the women want to eat their chocolate on the spot, after all: "Bei Ihnen ist es am schönsten, Her Ill" (p. 55). Again here, one person finishes another's thoughts. By this technique Dürrenmatt has made clear that the attitude of one person is shared by his neighbour. For this reason the moral outrage expressed by all at Claire's demand for Ill's life equals the moral degeneration at the town meeting. As the mayor pronounced the oath of the citizens in the name of justice, the mesmerizing chant begins and is repeated at the cameraman's request. But it is Ill who does not repeat his words. He has already faced and overcome his guilt. The townsfolk are in a benumbing, trance-like state and incapable of individual thought.

One of the most frightening aspects of this drama is the slow but unrelenting transformation of attitudes on the part of the townspeople. Initially, Alfred Ill, the storekeeper, is the well-

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[38]Murray B. Peppard, Friedrich Dürrenmatt. (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 59.

[39]Ibid.

beloved citizen and a strong candidate for mayor -- provided he can convince Claire to support Güllen financially. But as the play unfolds, he is denounced by all factions of society, including his own family. Yet the rejection is far from overt. Instead Ill realizes the danger he faces only gradually; no one will admit the unspoken intent to accept Claire's conditions. The townsfolk of Güllen never reject their loudly professed moral principles because these are kept well-hidden in their deeper consciousness alongside feelings of guilt and principle.[40]

Dürrenmatt is not as concerned with the actual murder of Ill as he is with the conscious reactions of the citizens, i.e. how a society can condone an obvious crime of murder yet exhort its belief in occidental moral values and ethics.[41] Life in modern society is economically conditioned regardless of moral principle.[42] When an individual or a piece of information has outworn its expediency, these people prefer to forget it:

> Ill: (...) Klara liebte die Gerechtigkeit.
> Ausgesprochen. Einmal wurde ein Vagabund
> abgeführt. Sie bewarf den Polizisten mit Steinen.
>
> Burgermeister: Gerechtigkeitsliebe. Nicht schlecht.
> Wirkt immer. Aber die Geschichte mit dem
> Polizisten unterschlagen wir besser (p. 19).

Ill's fate is sealed as a result of this tendency. The citizens had put Kläri's disgrace out their minds and concentrated on Claire's wealth and benevolence. They conveniently forget that

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[40]Marahrens, "Dürrenmatt and the 'Universal'", p. 165.

[41]Profitlich, "Dürrenmatt: Der Besuch der alten Dame," p. 326.

[42]Peppard, Friedrich Dürrenmatt. p. 61.

they saw Ill as a favorite son immediately after Claire rejects him.

According to Murray Peppard: "Language is used almost exclusively to conceal thoughts and intentions and veil them with words that are formally correct but palpably insincere."[43] To appreciate the truth of this statement, one need only consider how the townspeople hide the truth of the trial behind the facade of a town-meeting for the benefit of the international media. To Ill's face, his friends and family had professed continued solidarity with him. Yet the greater their collective debt-load becomes, the more they perceive Ill's actions of 45 years previously as unjust, and Claire's position as justified.[44] For example, only the teacher, who represents the voice of learning and humanism, admits his own culpability:

> Man wird Sie töten. Ich weiß es, von Anfang an, und auch Sie wissen es schon lange, auch wenn es in Güllen sonst niemand wahrhaben will. Die Versuchung ist zu groß und unsere Armut zu bitter. Aber ich weiß noch mehr. Auch ich werde mitmachen. Ich fühle, wie ich langsam zu einem Mörder werde. Mein Glaube an die Humanität ist machtlos. Und weil ich es weiß, bin ich ein Säufer geworden (p. 103).

Thus the teacher turns to alcohol to hide from himself and the awareness of his own impotence against the temptation he perceives as evil and the rootlessness of his humanism in the face of greed.

It is in the second act that the reader and Ill first discover how his peers have already decided to accept Claire's money

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

according to her conditions. Here we encounter the sudden free-spending on credit of the Güllener. The symbolic representation of the citizens' collaboration is the appearance of new yellow shoes on their feet. Dominik Jost has commented that yellow as the colour of both the shoes and of gold represents the Gülleners' submission to temptation. Even the interpretation of nature has been coloured by the greed:[45] "Gelb alles, nun ist der Herbst auch wirklich da. Laub am Boden wie Haufen von Gold" (pp. 59-60).

Even the policeman, whose duty is to enforce social order, reveals his own role within the growing disorder. Not only does he wear the yellow shoes, and drink fine beer, but he sports a shiny new gold tooth. He has no intention of acceding to Ill's demands and arresting Claire or even of holding her pending an investigation. Instead he argues that her suggestion to murder Ill cannot be meant seriously, because the financial reward is too great. Furthermore, one could not arrest her if she were serious, since in that case she would obviously be insane. His concerns as a police officer are presently directed towards capturing Claire's escaped panther. Soon Ill understands that he, himself, is hunted along with the panther. Even the town's policemen are corrupted by financial promise.

Next, the mayor brusquely attempts to scold Ill for his offensive mistrust, once Ill demands the protection of the authorities:

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[45]Dominik Jost, "Vom Gelde: Der Besuch der alten Dame," In: Zu Friedrich Dürrenmatt, p. 80.

> Sie vergessen, daß Sie sich in Güllen befinden. In einer Stadt mit humanistischer Tradition. Goethe hat hier übernachtet. Brahms ein Quartett komponiert. Diese Werte verpflichten (p. 69).

One cannot comprehend how a nation with a proud tradition of culture and humanism could simultaneously ignore the very principles upon which this tradition could thrive. The blind hypocracy and opportunism of the post-war years surfaces with the advent of the economic miracle. Indifferent and insensitive to their misdeeds and amazingly self-righteous in their false virtue, these Gülleners stand for the citizens of a new consumerism in the western world.

The "Bürgermeister", who speaks as the representative of consensual order through elected government, pleads with Ill to take his own life for the sake of "Gemeinschaftsgefühl, aus Liebe zur Vaterstadt" and the "hungrige[n] Kinder" (p. 108). The mayor sees this as Ill's chance to be a decent citizen and make peace with himself before the town meeting that evening. Moments later, Ill compliments his wife on her fine new fur. The mayor and others, including Ill's own family, are sinking in a morass of debt. Nevertheless, he rationalizes for both Ill and himself the drastic action he suggests, while simultaneously collaborating with Claire's scheme. Allowing himself and the citizens of the town he regulates to fall into insurmountable debt is a tacit acknowledgement that somehow the money will be their own. If Ill can be convinced to the dirty deed for them, that would be most convenient, but nevertheless he must die.

Concluding this series of illuminating dialogues with the town's leading representative figures is Ill's telling encounter with the priest. One discovers through the priest the degeneration of protestant ethics as a viable system of values and principles. Whatever hold the church had on society as a guide to responsible living is rendered illegitimate in the course of Ill's and the priest's dialogue. Not even the priest can restrain himself from yielding to the temptation of financial and material gain. He suggests Ill concern himself with his eternal life. Then the new church bell peals to the greater glory of Gold. The minister's only concern then is the quality and tone of the bell's ring, and of his own betrayal to his Church by hypocritically offering spiritual advice to a man whose death he wills.[46]

Just as the community now sacrifices Ill to achieve economic security and comfort, so did Ill sacrifice Klări forty-five years ago to avoid economic ruin.[47] But the difference in the two situations lies in Ill's capacity to comprehend the gravity of his sin against Claire and accept his punishment manfully:

> Ich habe Klara zu dem gemacht, was sie ist, und mich zu dem, was ich bin, ein verschmierter windiger Krämer. Was soll ich tun, Lehrer von Güllen? Den Unschuldigen spielen? Alles ist meine Tat, die Eunuchen, der Butler,

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[46]Karl S. Guthke, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Besuch der alten Dame," In: Das deutsche Drama vom Expressionismus bis zur Gegenwart. Interpretationen. hrsg. von Manfred Brauneck, 3. Auflage, (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1977), p. 245.

[47]Manfred Durzak, "Die Travestie der Tragödie in Dürrenmatts Der Besuch der alten Dame und Die Physiker, " In: Der Deutschunterricht. Beiträge zu seiner Praxis und wissenschaftlichen Grundlegung, 28 (1976), 87.

> der Sarg, die Milliarde. Ich kann mir nicht mehr helfen und auch euch nicht mehr (pp. 102-103).

The townspeople, on the other hand, mask their action against Ill as a necessary act of justice to avenge another's wrongdoing and purge themselves of associated guilt. They mask this farce of injustice so well that not only are they not punished by any court, but are financially rewarded[48] and internationally acclaimed. It is most ironic that it is the teacher, the self-proclaimed humanitarian, who carries the charge against Ill:

> Gemeinde von Güllen! Dies der bittere Tatbestand: Wir duldeten die Ungerechtigkeit. Ich erkenne nun durchaus die materielle Möglichkeit, die uns die Milliarde bietet; ich übersehe keineswegs, daß die Armut die Ursache von so viel Schlimmem, Bitterem ist, und dennoch: Es geht nicht um Geld, -"Riesenbeifall"- es geht nicht um Wohlstand und Wohlleben, nicht um Luxus, es hegt darum, ob wir Gerechtigkeit verwirklichen wollen, und nicht nur sie, sondern auch all die Ideale, für die unsere Altvordern gelebt und gestritten hatten und für die sie gestorben sind, die den Wert unseres Abendlandes ausmachen! "Riesenbeifall" (p. 121).

The final chorus of Der Besuch der alten Dame glorifies the town's financial success, while Dürrenmatt deplores their moral lassitude. As did Brecht before him, Dürrenmatt uses the chorus to criticize not merely society, but also the power structures within the social system. The chorus in no way acts as an assessment of man's position relative to the gods.[49] The rationalization of their crime is complete now that the Gülleners have seen the murder as its opposite: a duty to be fulfilled in the name of justice and

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[48] Ibid., p. 86.

[49] McDonald, "Dürrenmatt's The Visit," p. 135.

humanity, which originally forbade the deed.[50] Unlike the chorus of a sophoclean drama, this group does not praise human worth and ability, or strength of character. They rejoice at their putative fate.[51] Again, in this play the characters refuse to see themselves as responsible for their actions. Rather, they pronounce their new wealth as a sign of the gods' favour when it is they who engineered Ill's death:

> Chor II: Doch nichts ist ungeheurer als die Armut. (...)
> Alle: Wohl uns
> Frau Ill: Denen ein freundlich Geschick
> Alle: Dies alles wandte (p. 133).

This final chorus of wealthy, pretentious Biedermeier pervert the original style of the Sophoclean chorus in its blasphemy and blindness.[52]

Within an otherwise bleak commentary on man's condition in an economic boom-town, the reader may discern remnants of the "world order".[53] Specifically with the rational and conscious awareness of one individual, Dürrenmatt belies his faith in the nature of man.[54] Ill was able to comprehend his crime and pay retribution for it. His fellow townsmen could only adapt their application of basic moral principles to suit their own personal financial needs. Yet we sense Dürrenmatt's belief that so long as one individual pursues

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[50]Profitlich, "Dürrenmatt. Der Besuch der alten Dame," p. 238.

[51]Ibid., p. 341.

[52]Profitlich, "Dürrenmatt. Der Besuch der alten Dame", p. 341.

[53]Marahrens, "Dürrenmatt and the 'Universal'", p. 171.

[54]Ibid.

fairness and legitimacy of spirit in his dealings with himself and others, then there is hope for us all.

III 4. Doc and Anna.

In Der Mitmacher, Dürrenmatt examines the impact of a major economic crisis upon an intellectual. This character, a scientist known as "Doc", is left without employment when a massive recession forbids the public and private sectors from supporting scientific research. Doc seeks economic refuge in a business which completely eliminates whomever a client wishes -- on payment, naturally. By exploiting the fruits of years of scientific study, Doc can reduce corpses to their essential amino acids, thereby leaving no trace of a body. Of course, the enterprise which enlists Doc's skill may now thrive, since it is unencumbered with mounting corpses and evidence.

Doc is not forced to join the enterprise due to coercion or poverty. Nevertheless, he joins voluntarily, deliberately putting his intellect and crucial knowledge at their disposal, regardless of any ethical implications. Thus it would appear that the economic crisis left Doc without the scruples one would expect of an erudite scientist, because scruples have become a luxury he feels he can ill-afford in these tough economic times. Joseph Strelka outlines how the very act of existence involves some form of collaboration according to Dürrenmatt. Thus everyone is necessarily a collaborator. However, Doc is representative of the "intellectual proletariat" and collaborates despite his education

and awareness of moral responsibility.[55] For these reasons Dürrenmatt labels Doc a "negative collaborator":

> Aber der eigentlich negative Mitmacher in seiner bedenklichsten Form ist der Intellektuelle, der trotzdem mitmacht. Dieser Intellektuelle braucht durchaus kein "Fachidiot" zu sein (was ihn noch entschuldigen würde); entscheidend ist, daß ihm das moralische Sensorium fehlt. Diser Mangel ist das eigentlich Nihilistische an ihm; daß einer entgegen seiner Erkenntnis handelt oder nicht handelt, ist für jene unverständlich, die der Meinung sind, auf die Erkenntnis des Notwendigen folge auch seine Verwirklichung. (...) Moral ist nicht schon die Erkenntnis des Notwendigen. Moral ist das Verwirklichen dieser Erkenntnis.[56]

Although Doc is provided with two opportunities to redeem himself as a caring, upright man, he finally reneges on both as his concern for himself and money weaken his already weak resolve. Doc could have shown his individual strength by acknowledging and taking responsibility for his love and close personal ties to his lover Ann and to his son Bill. However, in the face of harm to himself, he denies all involvement with them. Our discussion will isolate and examine the first of these two trials: Doc's relationship with Ann.

Dürrenmatt has offered insight and comment to this play with his lengthy "Nachwort". Through inference he makes it clear, for example, that his protagonist always had choice, but refused to acknowledge responsibility for the various consequences of his

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[55]Joseph P. Strelka, "The Significance of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Play The Collaborator (Der Mitmacher)", In: Play Dürrenmatt, p. 98.

[56]Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Der Mitmacher. Ein Komplex, Diogenes Taschenbuch 250/14, Werkausgabe in dreißig Bänden, Bd. 14, Neufassung, (Zürich: Diogenes Verlag AG, 1980), p. 107. All subsequent quotations from this novel have been taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

deeds, preferring to see them all in hindsight as the inevitable results of Fate, or chance.[57] The author describes how we, in our arrogance and devotion to our own particular perspective, all prefer to absolve ourselves of the burden of guilt and ethical choice by arguing in favour of causality:

> Alles hätte zwar anders gehen können, gewiß, doch indem es geschah, wurde es zum Faktum, zum Schicksal, das nachträglich sichtbar wird (...). Was wir Kausalität im menschlichen Leben, in menschlicher Geschichte nennen, oder Gesetzmäßigkeit, ist ein oberflächliches und reichlich bequemes Ordnungsprinzip, nicht mehr; die Tatsachen, die uns nicht passen, all die verpassten Chancen zum Besseren, die Liebe eben als die Möglichkeit, auszubrechen, ins Freie zu gelangen, wischen wir unter den Teppich, den wir, jämmerlich genug, als Sklaven unserer selbst, in mühevoller Arbeit geknüpft haben (pp. 140-41).

In the above quotation, Dürrenmatt mentions love as a possibility for the betterment of one's condition, because it may facilitate one's escape into freedom. This is precisely what Doc and Ann are incapable of achieving. While these two do fall in love, they do so against their will and better judgement. Because their love demands tremendous altruism and strength, each has to make certain of his individual priorities. As we shall see, neither one proves strong enough to overcome his love of material goods or to trust the strength of honesty and love.

In the "Nachwort" Dürrenmatt discusses the three types of love and which of these corresponds to Doc's and Ann's situation. Theirs is not the unattainable, idealised love of Don Quixote, nor the purely sexual desire of Don Juan. Rather, they possess the

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[57]Strelka, "The Significance of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Play", p. 100.

"nicht abstrahierbare Liebe: (p. 136) of one individual for another. Nevertheless, that love which has the potential to become a liberating, satisfying, ennobling power finally self-destructs due to fear and dishonesty.

As the author explains to the reader during the discussion of the role of monologue in this play, silence and evasion are crucial aspects of each character's self-expression. Neither one trusts the other. Correspondingly, truth may not be revealed, because it leaves one vulnerable to anyone who may hear it. It is only through silence or evasion that one can safely avoid revealing too much about oneself and one's hopes. These character consistently keep their cards close to their chest. Otherwise, in a climate which holds no regard for the value of life in relation to the value of hard currency, where anyone is expendable because someone else will gladly step in to take over one's situation and affluence, one will inevitably fall victim to someone's greed. Truth and love -- both intangible, incorporeal ideals -- have become expendable since they are liabilities.

The characters in this play are always trying to protect themselves and, as the following quotation explains, they must hide their true feelings in silence:

> (...) die Menschen im Mitmacher sind gezwungen, sich zu verstellen, ihre Antworten sind ein Ausweichen, ihre Fragen ein Belauern usw. Sie tragen einen Machtkampf aus, müssen sich behaupten. Es ist (...) ein Stück des Lebenkampfes, eine sprachlose Angelegenheit, weil die Sprache zum Verräter werden kann. Daher ein Stück des Verschweigens, nicht des Redens (p. 123).

The short, charged statements of Ann and Doc when they so reluctantly confess their love for each other are prime examples of this. Indeed, Dürrenmatt himself refers to that moment as being one of the most despairing of the play.[58] This is because these two collaborators have become loathe to anyone else having claims upon them which might impinge upon whatever limited freedom they may still possess. Furthermore, they see themselves as helpless to effect real change in their lives regardless of their mutual admission.

Ann and Doc's love, which is the sole means and inducement for them to cease their collaboration, makes stringent demands:

> Die Liebe verlangt nämlich von den beiden, was gerade ihnen unmöglich ist: keine Furcht zu haben, was der geheime Grund ihre Mitmacherei ist, was die beiden ausmacht. Denn beide sind Mitmacher. Doch im Gegensatz zu Doc will Ann nicht wissen, bei was sie mitmacht, aus Furcht vor der Wahrheit (p. 139).

For them to have no fear would require them to trust each other. Yet they have lost the ability to trust in their concern for their own well-being. Their original desire for a few comforts has become a compulsion. Neither can give of himself freely since each is too self-involved. Ann's death could have been avoided had each been able to measure human worth as greater than material worth. They need the strength and consolation the other's love could have provided. Yet their own self-interest precluded this. Neither Doc

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[58]The precise quotation is: "Die unwillkürliche Liebeserklärung Anns, welche die ebenso unwillkürliche Liebeserklärung Docs erzwingt, ist einer der verzweifelsten Momente des Stücks" (p. 142).

nor Ann has the strength "to step in sovereign subjectivity"[59] and acknowledge the other's individuality. Without that trust, the love which developed between them, in spite of their egos, cannot triumph.

Doc and Ann desperately want to attain some degree of freedom by attaining the material wealth and comforts that they believe will carry them out of their relative poverty, dependence on Boss, and service to him. However, the notion of freedom which they hope material wealth will grant them is merely an unfounded illusion. Paradoxically, the wealth they individually accumulate by exploiting themselves, Ann as a mistress and Doc as an accessory to murder, only tightens the chains binding each to Boss. Their materialism only increases their dependency upon the man from whom they are trying to escape by acquiring wealth; each hopes to break free of collaborating by collaborating just a bit longer (p. 139). They continue to deceive themselves and each other about the hope which is forever lost to them.[60] They are unwittingly limiting further whatever freedom they had hoped to gain. Moreover, by not allowing themselves to succumb to their "nicht abstrahierbare Liebe", and reveal the entire truth about their respective situations, they obstruct one viable route to liberty. Dürrenmatt sums up this idea as follows:

> Dialektisch in bezug auf das "Mitmachen": aus etwas Freiwilligem, aus einer Laune beider, wird ein Zwang,

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[59]Strelka, "The Significance of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Play", p. 101.

[60]Ibid., p. 100.

> eliminierte Freiheit, plötzlich stellen sich Notwendigkeiten ein, die "an sich" noch keine Notwendigkeiten sind, es aber durch die Umstände werden. Die Kausalität eines Stücks stellt sich allmählich ein (p. 140).

Their collaboration, which initially seemed an easy way to provide a decent living, which they chose without regard for the ethical implications and possible repercussions, involves not only their own destruction, but also the destruction of the people they love. Ann shrugs aside her suspicions of Kitty's abrupt disappearance; Doc has no qualms about using his research to aid killing rather than to assist others in productive medical research, for example. Ann may be judged calculating and foolish for ignoring the plight of her friend and wanting the Rembrandt as much as Doc; he in turn must be considered as cold-blooded and cowardly for ignoring his scientific scruples as well as quietly submitting to Boss's intimidation and revenge. But while Doc is confronted with one more path to freedom that he could travel, Ann is condemned. She is murdered by Boss who, fully cognizant of her infidelity with his new partner, leaves Doc to dispose of her corpse in an ironic act of retribution.

Here, the casualties of capitalism have become modern parallels for the horror and pain of the bloody wars throughout history.[61] We have seen that both Doc and Ann were inclined towards negative collaboration and related opportunistic behaviour for economic reasons. Dürrenmatt's assessment of this kind of economic opportunism can be surmised in this way. Doc was making a viable,

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[61]Renate Usmiani, "Die späten Stücke: Porträt eines Planeten, Der Mitmacher, Der Frist" In: Zu Friedrich Dürrenmatt, p. 150.

although meager living as a cab-driver, Ann as a model. They chose their destiny when they knowingly began associating and finally collaborating with underworld figures. The author's comment on causality should be remembered here. It is only once we make our choices, be they good or bad, and then later reflect upon them that we convince ourselves that we were guided by the hand of Fate. We thereby abdicate all responsibility for our actions. It is we who decide our priorities in life, while guided by the media and prevailing societal values. Dürrenmatt, himself, hesitates from isolating the various social and historical mechanisms which cause his characters' corruption.[62] Ironically, both Doc and Ann "(...) versuchen, sich von ihrem Mitmachen in ein anständiges Leben hinüberzuretten, indem sie weiter mitmachen (...)" (p. 140). They have a naive hope that wealth will provide them with respectability, even though they surrender what respectability or principles they previously possessed in the process.

In addition, both Doc and Ann are soundly trounced by the "forces of evil", the underworld figures with whom they associated. The reader might well mourn Ann, who dies as a result of her own weakness, a weakness compounded by social ideals too formidable for her to transcend. Her love for Doc and fear for his safety only mitigate somewhat her own guilt. Doc's own end is as miserable, having lived to lose those whom he loved, as well as all hope of escaping his underground laboratory for a financially secure life

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[62]Knapp, "Dürrenmatt's Physicists," p. 59.

in society. His continued ostracism underground is certain, only now against his will.

Through their collaboration, Ann and Doc facilitated their own defeat, having individually set into motion the so-called causality which "(...) setzt sich aus Fakten zusammen, deren jedes aus vielen Möglichkeiten entstanden ist, manchmal zwangsläufig, manchmal zufällig, meist zufällig" (p. 140).

III 5. Concluding Remarks.

Common to these three works discussed in this chapter is the hope that financial security will somehow make life more tolerable and provide one with respectability. Both Walser and DÜrrenmatt underscore the suspension of moral and ethical responsibility by the individual in relation to monetary gain. These authors have indicated their views towards the new consumer-oriented society, which values material worth over human dignity. In all three selections man has lost his individuality within the social unit and has become a commodity himself. One estimates one's own personal worth against the sum total of his financial worth. Thus the characters hope to become "anständige Menschen" by increasing their financial holdings. In this way they compromise whatever vestiges of moral behaviour they still possess in spite of society's universal disregard for ethical principle. With the onset of the German "Economic Miracle", these authors reveal the

"good life" to be determined solely by economic factors which are indifferent to traditional codes of ethical behaviour.

Personal integrity is denied all the major characters as we have discussed, save Ill (and Cop in Der Mitmacher). In Halbzeit, Anselm's incessant mimicry severely damages his health. Der Besuch der alten Dame sees Ill killed because he refused to collaborate, while the Güllener consider no other alternative except collaboration. In Der Mitmacher, Ann and Doc's collaboration costs Ann's life and their chance to stop collaborating. Every instance of opportunism here is founded on the desire for economic advancement, no matter what the cost to one's own or to anyone else's well-being. Walser and Dürrenmatt underscore the recent phenomenon inverting the attainment of self-respect and self-worth. We are not shown an ordinary socio-economic selfishness, since all these characters lack the definitive subjectivity necessary for egocentric greed. Rather, we have here the need of average people hoping to acquire a more defined sense of self through the acquisition of material goods, because only the financially successful are deemed useful persons worthy of society's respect.

IV Political and Economic Opportunists.

IV 1. Introduction.

This last chapter will concern itself with two characters who are neither purely political nor purely economic opportunists. Naturally, it is impossible to isolate the political realm from the economic completely. Such a sharp delineation would imply that political and economic spheres are independent of each other; this chapter serves to show the overlap between the two sectors. Furthermore, we shall see that someone with opportunistic tendencies in his political dealings will likely display similar tendencies in the financial world and vice versa. Ultimately, someone capable of a sudden reversal in his political point of view is most likely capable of an economic one, since he would likely lack the moral, ethical, or ideological principle necessary for committed, unshakable political and economic views.

IV 2. Dr. Fuchs.

The first of the two figures to be examined here is Dr. Fuchs from the novel Halbzeit. Fuchs was a dedicated Nazi and propaganda specialist under Goebbels during the Third Reich. Following the war, Fuchs relinquished his attachment to National Socialist ideology to become a major figure in the economic world as the chief advertising executive of a major concern in the food industry. In his new capacity, Fuchs applies the same techniques for propaganda which he learned while still a part of the NS propaganda machine. Presently, however, Dr. Fuchs cajoles the

economically successful German consumer through hard and persuasive advertising to purchase "Frantzke" products.

Dr. Fuchs is one of the various former NS adherents who have since become good republicans of the post-1945 order. As well, those who were victimized during the Third Reich have since attempted to reorganize and rebuild their lives. Walser plays this point successfully in the novel as the reader and the protagonist, Anselm, are introduced to chief officers of the Frantzke firm: "Der erste mit der sorgfältig gepappten Friseur war wohl Dr. Fuchs, der Verkaufschef, früher ein hoher SD-Mann"[1] (p. 414). Dr. Pinne was formerly with the "Deutsche Arbeitsfront", and Herr Ballhuber was under Goebbels' command along with Dr. Fuchs. Finally, there is Dr. von Ratow, Frantzke's legal advisor, whose father was a resistance fighter. Anselm then fantasizes as to whether von Ratow pere had been executed on Fuch's orders for taking part in the attack on Hitler of July 20, 1944. It is this Dr. von Ratow whom Anselm mistakes for Dr. Fuchs. Thus Walser shows how complete the integration of persecutor and victim has been within the new republic. Both men hold equally prominent positions which serves to mask their inconsistent relationship to the past.[2] As Anselm says: "Irgendwo müßten diese Leute ja auch bleiben (...)" (p. 415).

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[1]Walser, Halbzeit, p. 414. All subsequent quotations from this novel will have page numbers indicated in parentheses within the text.

[2]Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte, p. 40.

Of course, there are still others, like Josef-Heinrich and Justus, and Onkel Gallus, who created new lives for themselves after 1945. There are also other victims of the NS regime who, in the novel, did not reintegrate into society as well as the von Ratow family. Indeed, Susanne's suffering and trauma have prevented her from readapting successfully; whatever beliefs and principles held dear by many victims of Nazi oppression may well have been destroyed as a result of their misfortunes. Others could still rebuild their lives in spite of all that had been destroyed, simply because they still had their fundamental beliefs on which to hold. For the NS officials, however, readjustment to a new order meant discarding the strict beliefs of their ideology: the ideals of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Third Reich were completely at odds with each other. Such men, as mentioned above, were shamelessly opportunistic once the Reich crumbled: "(...) und wie selten begegnest du einem Nazi, der noch einer ist" (p. 545)! The primary concern of these men, as with so many others, was survival during chaos.

Society itself in post-war Germany facilitated the former Nazis' reintegration through its studied indifference.[3] While some people did not want to look too deeply for war criminals for fear of their own NS past being discovered, most simply did not want to look too deeply at themselves and their guilt as Germans. In adopting the capitalist, free-market system of economics from the U.S., the new German republic copied its political system as well.

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[3]Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte, p. 40.

Thus, Heike Doane argues, the characters in Halbzeit are "not democrats out of political conviction, but rather beneficiaries of the free economic system."[4] To get ahead in the new system, one must play according to the rules of both the new economic and political infrastructures and conform to the demands of both.

It is during the meeting for the Frantzke ad-campaign that one sees how Edmund has done his homework and knows that:

> Fuchs is der wichtigste Mann bei Frantzke. (...) er hat die Frantzke Farben erfunden, das leuchtende Rot, das fröhliche Grün auf jeder Dose, jeder Schachtel, er hat die Typenbeschränkung durchgesetzt, die Verkaufsorganisation gedrillt, die Verkäuferschule gegründet, Boykottaktionen gegen rebellische Einzelhändler gestartet" (p. 415).

One hears, too, that Edmund has obtained a copy of Dr. Fuchs' dissertation: "Die Bewegung und die Propaganda". If one considers the work Fuchs has done for the firm with regard to his dissertation, one realises for the first time that he is applying the same techniques of his former political position to his present economically-oriented career.

Dr. Fuchs' address to those attending the advertising meeting reveals the above point most clearly:

> Dr. Fuchs entwickelte Grundsätze: das Ziel sei die Eroberung der Massen, jedes Mittel, das dafür tauge, sei gut, deshalb bloß keine Werbekunst, die sich selbst in den Schwanz beiße, ob wir da einig sind?
>
> Alle nickten.
>
> Schön, sagte Dr. Fuchs, nachdem da alle mit Dr. Goebbels und mir übereinstimmen, denn es war Goebbels, den ich da zitierte, können wir zu Details kommen. Ihm fehle noch der zündende Funke in unserem Plan, der Griff ins Unterbewußte (p. 421).

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[4] Ibid.

Here Fuchs insists that to win the bid, the advertisement must convince the consumer unquestionably that the "Bianca" toothpaste will actually harden the teeth. His concern is not the validity of the statement, but the power of propagandistic persuasion. For him the whole purpose of the advertisement entails:

> (...) diesen Glauben zu verbreiten (...). Meinen Sie vielleicht, es sei eine Bagatelle gewesen, Liberalismus und Marxismus zu "einem" Gegner zu machen! Ich erinnere nur daran, um Ihnen zu zeigen, was Propaganda vermag, wenn sie nur genug vornimmt. Goebbels gelang es (p. 421).

And later he says:

> (...) selbst wenn Ihnen keiner glaubt, daß das stimmt, so wird doch jeder wünschen, es wäre so, und diesen Wunsch im Herzen kauft er Bianca (p. 422).

Advertising in the hard-sell capitalist climate of the 1950s no longer may extol the true merits of a product which has been on the market for years. Instead, the consumer is exploited by the clever advertiser.[5] Now packaging and new claims are developed, while the product itself remains the same. Suddenly, the transparent tube contains the incredible tooth-hardening ingredients of "Bianca" toothpaste, for example. The actual, proven qualities of a product are essentially irrelevant[6] -- any product can be sold given the proper sales and advertising gimmicks.

Dr. Fuchs understands that a mental assault has to be launched on the consumer by the advertiser. By satisfying some unconscious desire of the consumer, he can be convinced despite his better judgement to purchase any product. Thus Walser highlights the

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[5]Pezold, Martin Walser, p. 113.

[6]Ibid., p. 40.

close interconnections between the objectives of propaganda for politics and economics, and of old NS ideals. The NS past survives through the commercial success of a major company.

The society of the Federal Republic tolerates such former NS men in their midst provided they do not offend the unspoken guidelines of the present system. As a Nazi war criminal identified by a former KZ-inmate, Fuchs' arrest is justified.[7] But the reactions of that level of society with which Fuchs mingles socially and professionally, i.e. the Frantzke set, are somewhat surprising. Once his past is made known, his friends and colleagues express not so much outrage at his actions, rather they express disbelief both at his present misfortune, and at their not having known better for sheltering him in their midst. Once identified and arrested, Fuchs is rejected by the majority of his contemporaries, since they were well aware of one fact: "Das Ausland paßt auf wie ein Luchs, verstehen Sie?" (p. 812).

Nevertheless, Frau Frantzke still admires the man tremendously:

> Die Gnädige hatte es da schwerer als andere, weil sie nicht gut gegen Dr. Fuchs aussagen konnte. Da war die Erinnerung an jenen Festtag. Was auch immer Dr. Fuchs verbrochen haben mochte, vor dem wild gewordenen Metzgermeister hatte er sie gerettet. Kavalier bleibt Kavalier. Und dann hatte die Gnädige immer gern die Meinung befördert, daß in der Betriebsführung ein Reservat für sich beanspruchte: Personalfragen. Es war ein Teil ihres Ansehens, ihrer Macht, daß man nur über sie zu Frantzke konnte (p. 814).

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[7]Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte, p. 41.

The final two sentences of the above quotation begin the preamble to her expression of regret to Alissa and Anselm Kristlein at having been "duped" by Dr. Fuchs and at his ostracism:

> Ich habe das Gefühl, als lernte ich die Menschen jetzt erst kennen, und dachte doch seit zwanzig Jahren, ich sei weiß Gott was für eine Menschenkennerin. Erinnern Sie sich noch an unser Gartenfest und ans Roxy, als Hünlein der Ärmste, als seine Verliebtheit mit ihm durchging und Dr. Fuchs als Kavalier mir beisprang, waren da nicht alle Für Dr. Fuchs? Es ist wie mit Barrabas und Jesus, und jeder ein Pilatus (p. 815).

Dr. Fuchs' colleagues in the Frantzke firm also express their concern about the recent turn of events. Unlike Frau Frantzke, however, they have little sympathy for him now that he has fallen from grace. Indeed, the man whom they had supported as their superior, and whose NS propaganda techniques brought the company financial and commercial success is now considered a deserving outcast.

Ballhuber is especially sanctimonious in manner towards the fall of Dr. Fuchs.

> Erstaunlich war, wie der Personaldirektor Ballhuber sich durchschlug. Gott sei dank wird der Personaldirektor nur gefragt, wenn Bürodiener eingestellt werden, sagte Ballhuber. Allerdings habe er seinem lieben Freund Fuchs immer gesagt: sorge dafür, daß Du das Hinterland in Ordnung bringst. Leider habe sein lieber Freund Fuchs solche Ratschläge mit Hochmut, ja sogar mit Verachtung zurückgewiesen. Aber wozu hatten wir die Entnazifizierung, rief Ballhuber. Bitte, ich habe mein Papierchen, und anderthalb Jahre hab [sic] ich gleich abgemacht, schon vor 48, als noch nichts los war. Fuchs ging sein eigenen Weg, er weigerte sich, die Nachkriegsgerechtigkeit anzuerkennen. Hätte er damals den Kopf hingehalten, bitte, jeder Mensch kann irren, aber nein er ist eben ein Querkopf, jetzt hat er den Salat, und vor 48 ein, zwei Jährchen, das Essen war im Bau auch nicht schlechter und man mußte wenigstens nicht anstehen, aber jetzt noch einmal hinter Schloß und Regel,

> ich danke. Der arme Kerl. Er ist eben immer zu eigensinnig gewesen, finden Sie auch, Herr von Ratow.
> Herr von Ratow fand das auch (pp. 812-13).

Dr. Fuchs never made any secret of, nor any apology for his NS past, but immersed himself in the post-Nazi society with the same vigour he had employed during the Third Reich. Ballhuber, on the other hand, believed that to integrate oneself into the new republic successfully, one had to follow the rules, i.e. renounce one's past beliefs before embracing the new order. He feels that because he was "de-nazified", he undid his past wrongs as far as the rest of society was concerned.[8] Although both Ballhuber and Fuchs worked for Goebbels, only Fuchs is sacrificed: firstly, because someone happened to recognize him, and secondly, because he was simply too "eigensinnig". Society had not been compelled to grapple with Fuchs' uncomfortable association to the new order. So long as he was an asset to the economic structure of the company and country, he was left alone. No one had any desire to rake up the past; things were progressing far too well for German society on both the domestic and world fronts for anyone to draw unnecessary negative attention to the young republic. People were suddenly compelled to deal with both their individual and collective guilt[9] once the subtle camouflage of the upper echelons had been penetrated by the former KZ-prisoner via the media. Fuchs was

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[8]Doane, Gesellschaftspolitische Aspekte, p. 40.

[9]Ibid., p. 41.

now regarded as a traitor to the code of silence about the past shrouding his society.[10]

> Wenn Dr. Fuchs eine ansteckende Krankheit verschwiegen hätte, wäre nichts anders gewesen. Jeder prüfte, wie weit er mit Dr. Fuchs im Zusammenhang genannt werden und welcher Schaden ihm daraü entstehen könnte" (p. 811).

For anyone to defend Fuchs without qualification is thus tantamount to betrayal. Therefore, people's condolences are always couched in terms of previous suspicions or disgust:

> Wer Dr. Fuchs' Haltung verteidigte, fügte natürlich immer hinzu, daß er damit nicht verteidige, was Dr. Fuchs éventuell getan haben könne. Darüber sei vorerst auch noch sub judice. Ob jeder Häftling aus Oranienburg sich nicht doch getäuscht hat (p. 812)?

Now everyone felt he had the right to have doubted Fuchs' cha cter:

> Jeder beweist jetzt, daß er immer schon einen leisen Verdacht gehegt habe, man konnte es bloß nicht begründen. Einfach ein Gefühl war es, eine instinktive Reaktion eben (p. 810).

Ultimately, however, one opportunist, Dr. Fuchs, is sacrificed so that the many others may save themselves and continue to live in relative comfort and obscurity within the confines of silence in the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1950s. With regard to this novel, it is obvious that the political and economic opportunism of Dr. Fuchs is hardly exceptional.

IV 3. Mrs. Schnier.

> Doch sind sie in hohem Grade politisch aufgeladen dadurch, daß der abtrünnige Sohn, der "Renegat", im Familienimperium der "Braunkohlen-Schniers", die Wirt-

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[10] Ibid., p. 42.

> schaftsimperien der Bundesrepublik gespiegelt sieht--die Nutznießer eines privatwirtschaftlichen Systems, das in verschwiegener Kollaboration mit den jeweils Regierenden den politischen Wechsel überstand und sowohl von Hitlers sogenannten "Aufbau" profitierte wie vom Wiederaufbau nach dem Kriege, von der Diktatur wie von der Demokratie.[11]

With these words, Walter Hinck sums up the opportunism of the Schnier family before and after the Federal Republic came into existence. This section will concentrate upon Frau Schnier, now over 60, who seeks to typify the "super-housewife" of the new Germany, who juggles family life and social "good works". One sees her opportunism in relation not only to her economic outlook, but also to her political behaviour. Firstly, she adjusts her manner according to her social position, which simply must befit that of a wealthy coal industrialist's wife. She is active within the community. For years now she has headed the "Zentralkomitee der Gesellschaften zur Versöhnung rassischer Gegensätze" as its president. "(...) sie fährt zum Anne-Frank-Haus, gelegentlich sogar nach Amerika und hält vor amerikanischen Frauenklubs Reden über die Reue der deutschen Jugend (...)" in order to fulfill her duties.[12] The reader learns the depth of Mrs. Schnier's philanthropical tendencies, when told that despite her own six-figure bank account, all her telephone bills and travel costs to the

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[11] Walter Hinck, "Bölls Ansichten eines Clowns -- heute." In: Böll. Untersuchungen zum Werk, pp. 19-20.

[12] Heinrich Böll, Ansichten eines Clowns Roman. Mit Materialien und einem Nachwort des Autors, KiWi 86, (Köln: Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1963/1985), p. 39. All subsequent quotations from this novel will have page numbers indicated in parentheses within the text.

United States and elsewhere are debited to the Executive Committee's bank account (p. 41).

During the war, however, Mrs. Schnier strongly enjoined her family to help her and do its duty for the NS cause: "Du wirst doch einsehen, daß jeder das Seinige tun muß, die jüdischen Yankees von unserer heiligen deutschen Erde wieder zu vertreiben" (p. 32). It seems, then, that Mrs. Schnier's anti-racial tendencies have only developed since the end of the war.

Rainer Nägele cites one ironic passage to illustrate Hans Schnier's moral reproach against his mother:[13]

> Die Besorgnis um die heilige deutsche Erde ist auf eine interessante Weise komisch, wenn ich mir vorstelle, daß ein hübscher Teil der Braunkohlenaktien sich seit zwei Generationen in den Händen unserer Familie befindet (p. 33).

One sees how the very wealthy, who have much to lose, will necessarily side with those who will maintain or perhaps increase their present holdings. Mrs. Schnier's main concern is that her family not lose their fortune to anyone. Therefore, she supports the Nazi cause and ideology only as long as there is hope that the "Führer" will triumph. With Hitler's fall and the Allied victory, Mrs. Schnier quickly throws her full attention to the ideals of the infant republic. In this way, no penalty will be levied against the Schnier fortune. "Hurrah-Patriotismus und extreme[r] Chauvinismus" of this sort is denounced by Nägele.[14]

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[13]Nägele, "Die große Ordnung," p. 194.

[14]Nägele, "Die große Ordnung," p. 195.

As did all German youth, Mrs. Schnier's son, Hans, had to join the Hitler Youth, and her daughter, Henrietta, the BDM. Henrietta ended up sacrificing her life for her mother when she was killed at age 16 in February, 1945, near Leverkusen, after having had to volunteer for the Flak.

This kind of hypocracy was repeated when Mrs. Schnier became an "Antiatomkämpferin" (p. 232) for three days until she discovered that the effects of this political peace-action group could have tremendous negative repercussions on the stock market, and thus harm her own financial security. Hastily, she rescinds her membership. Again, Mrs. Schnier's actions are guided primarily by the prevalent economic and political climate surrounding her. She harboured no true thought for peace, nor genuine anti-nuclear motives in joining a ban-the-bomb group, rather she was conforming to the latest popular political movement. Typically for Mrs. Schnier, though, financial considerations outweigh even political trends.

Mrs. Schnier is tremendously wealthy, yet exceedingly stingy. Ironically, the woman who desires to be the prototypical mother of the prototypical German family, whether in the Third Reich or Federal Republic, is guilty of blatant and unnecessary neglect and deprivation of her children. The clown, Hans, tells his father the truth about the Schnier children's situation in their parents' household:

> "(...) du wirst dich wundern; die erstaunlichste Erfahrung unserer Kindheit war die Erkenntnis, daß wir zu Hause nie richtig zu fressen bekamen."

> Er zuckte zusammen, als ich fressen sagte, schluckte, lachte dann knurrend und fragte: "Du meinst, ihr wärt nie richtig satt geworden?" -- "Genau das", sagte ich ruhig, "Wir sind nie richtig satt geworden, wenigstens zu Hause nicht. Ich weiß bis heute nicht, ob es aus Geiz oder Prinzip geschah, mir wäre lieber, ich wüßte, daß es aus Geiz geschah (...)."
> "(...) Verdammt, wir wußten als Kinder immer nur, daß wir reich waren, sehr reich -- aber von diesem Geld haben wir nichts gehabt -- nicht einmal richtig zu essen" (p. 201).

After his lengthy visit with his father, Hans, ever cognizant of his mother's temperament, hastens back to collect his father's soiled handkerchief: "Meine Mutter konnte sehr unangenehm werden, wenn sie bei der monatlichen Wäschekontrolle ein Stück vermißte, sie würde die Mädchen des Diebstahls oder der Schlamperei bezichtigen" (p. 212).

Hans does not flatly condemn his mother, but neither does he gloss over her faults, thereby absolving her of responsibility. He says outright: "Sie ist gar nicht boshaft, nur auf eine unbegreifliche Weise dumm und sparsam" (p. 40). Rather than buying a new deck of cards, after Henriette tossed them in the fire during one of her mild trances, Mrs. Schnier became very angry:

> Sie schrie: "Diese verdammte Träumerei", und Henriette blickte sie an und sagte ruhig: "Was ist denn, ich habe einfach keine Lust mehr", und warf die Karten, die sie noch in der Hand hatte, ins Kaminfeuer. Meine Mutter holte die Karten aus dem Feuer, verbrannte sich die Finger dabei, rettete aber die Karten bis auf eine Herzsieben, die angesengt war, und wir konnten nicht mehr Karten spielen, ohne an Henriette zu denken, wenn auch meine Mutter so zu tun versuchte, "als wäre nichts gewesen" (pp. 39-40).

Hans also describes how he and his brother felt in their parents' home as young adults: "Wir beide, Leo und ich, betrachten unsere Eltern nur noch als eine Art Heimleiterehepaar" (p. 65).

Nevertheless, neither the reader nor Hans expects his mother's harshness once he quits school in the tenth grade at age 21 with no definite future plans except to become a clown:

> Meine Mutter war einfach gemein zu mir. Sie riet meinem Vater, mich in den "Pütt" zu stecken, und mein Vater fragte mich dauernd, was ich dann werden wolle, und ich sagte "Clown". (...) Es waren zwei fürchterliche Monate, denn ich fand nicht den Mut, wirklich abzuhauen, und bei jedem Bissen, den ich aß, blickte mich meine Mutter an, als wäre ich ein Verbrecher. Dabei hat sie jahrelang allerlei hergelaufene Schmarotzer am Fressen gehalten, aber das waren "Künstler und Dichter"; Schnitzler, dieser Kitschbruder, und Gruber, der gar nicht so übel war. Er war ein fetter, schwiegsamer und schmutziger Lyriker, der ein halbes Jahr bei uns wohnte und nicht eine einzige Zeile schrieb. (...) Für solche Leute ging meine Mutter sogar in den Keller und holte ein Extrastück Schinken (pp.52-53).

Hans goes on to say that had he pretended to be an artist, painting ridiculous forms on huge canvasses, then his mother could well have begun to tolerate his existence.

Both Schnitzler, the banned NS author, and Gruber were able to take advantage of Mrs. Schnier's desire to be a patron of art and culture. She saw herself as a pillar of the modern German society. Without giving any thought to the irony of her actions in light of the war, she joined and encouraged whatever political or philanthropic organization that seemed to hold social precedence. She could despise Jews during the war, but promote interracial co-cooperation afterwards. It is this kind of hypocracy which Hans Schnier rebels against, i.e. his mother's ability to forget the inopportune quickly.

His opinion of his mother's blatant political contradictions

manifests itself for Hans as a rebellion against the family itself.[15] She allowed herself to be taken in by the teacher Brühl's rhetoric, allowing the estate grounds to be used for Hitler youth bazooka practice. On that particular occasion, she claims that Hans could not have meant to call Herbert Kalick a Nazi swine because she says: "(...) ich müßte ja sonst meine Hand von ihm zurückziehen" (p.35). But once the new republic was created, her National Socialist sympathies are brushed aside for more expedient, democratic ones. It is after the war, then, when Mrs. Schnier blindly condescends to assist incompetent artists and frauds while ignoring the most elementary needs of her children.

Despite Mrs. Schnier's normally austere behaviour towards her children, she occasionally did feel the urge to be motherly and play cards by the fire with her sons. Unfortunately, though, her children usually were otherwise occupied or simply could not be bothered. Little did she realise that Hans and Leo refused to play with her because of that singed seven of Hearts which still reminded them of their dead sister. Hans describes such painful evenings:

> Sicher hat sie [Frau Schnier] plötzlich Sehnsucht, an dem schönen blankpolierten Mahogonitisch zu sitzen, Karten zu spielen, glückliche Familie zu sein. Aber immer, wenn sie Lust dazu hatte, hatte von uns keiner Lust dazu; es gab Szenen, Unverstandene-Mutter-Getue, dann bestand sie auf unserer Gehorsamspflicht, Viertes Gebot, merkte dann aber, daß es ein merkwürdiges Vergnügen sein würde, mit Kindern, die "nur" aus Gehorsamspflicht mitmachen, Karten zu spielen -- und ging weinend auf ihr Zimmer. Manchmal versucht sie es auch mit Bestechung, erbot sich, etwas "besonders Gutes" zu trinken oder zu essen herauszurücken

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[15]Hinck, "Bölls Ansichten eines Clowns," p. 19.

> -- und es wurde wieder einer von den tränenreichen Abenden, von denen Mutter uns so viele beschert hat (p. 222).

In vain, an aloof woman seeks to emulate the perfect, caring mother, but without offering the love and warmth for which her children yearn. Yet she is puzzled as to why her children distance themselves from her physically and emotionally. They are painfully aware that their mother's primary concern is the image she presents to those influential figures in German society whose opinion matters deeply to her: the powerful, the wealthy, the artistic, and the pseudo-talented. There exists no substance behind the facade she creates.

The harsh criticism levelled against German society in Ansichten eines Clowns is portrayed through the immediate subjectivity of a first-person narrator. Thus events are not reported by Schnier in chronological order, but as various impressions generate reminiscences.[16] The multitude of slings which Schnier hurls at his mother and her so-called friends, i.e. the opportunists and hangers-on with whom she associates, are testimony to the insults and injustices Hans suffered at their hands. While the past encroaches very much on Hans' present life, it is something with which he and his mother have refused to grapple. Indeed, this is true of the majority of German society in Böll's estimation.[17] A political and economic opportunist, like Mrs. Schnier, always triumphs because she completely cuts herself off

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[16]Noble, "Bölls epischer Entwicklung," p. 156.

[17]Nägele, "Die große Ordnung," p. 190.

from past events and her previous views. What is no longer useful to her is conveniently forgotten. Even her children take second place to her political and social ambitions. In Mrs. Schnier's eyes these ambitions can only be realised with the necessary economic might. Thus, for the family, she perverts sensible thrift into miserliness. Yet for the elite in German society, she throws levees and supports various "artists". Hans quotes his mother as saying "a lady should give off no odour" (p. 45); Mrs. Schnier exudes no odour, because she has no substance.

IV 4. Concluding Remarks.

In the two characters examined in this chapter, the reader has seen an inexorable intermingling of political and economic opportunism. Neither Dr. Fuchs nor Mrs. Schnier adhered to any political or economic philosophy, save the code of personal gain. During the Second World War, they threw themselves behind the National Socialist forces. Mrs. Schnier even demanded that her children do the same. The sole reason for these two having embraced National Socialism so dearly was their need for strength, especially economical strength. As long as the Nazis held power, both Dr. Fuchs and Mrs. Schnier could be sure of guaranteed social standing and economic security.

Once the Nazis were soundly defeated after 1945, both Dr. Fuchs and Mrs. Schnier were compelled to adapt themselves quickly and convincingly to the ideals of the burgeoning republic. By recognizing immediately the awkwardness of their respective

situations, they strove to forestall the seemingly inevitable political punishment and financial penalty. Thus both became leaders again, espousing the popular views of the post-war era: free-market capitalist economy and republican democracy. Moreover, both characters strongly supported the arts community, which had been so repressed during the Third Reich. As leaders within society, then, Dr. Fuchs and Mrs. Schnier managed to keep others from closely scrutinizing their political histories and effectively silenced those who were cognizant of their NS pasts. Neither figure was prepared to sacrifice any previously acquired social or economic clout, merely for the sake of political principles or former loyalties. Such individuals obviously have a strong chance of economic, and, therefore, social success in whatever political system they might find themselves. Yet within the novels each is punished. In Halbzeit, Dr. Fuchs is recognized by chance when he appears on a brief television clip. As a result, he loses his friends and his job. Ironically, he is thus deprived of comfortable social and economic position; he is ostracized. In Ansichten eines Clowns, Mrs. Schnier should have complete satisfaction from her decisions during and after the Second World War. She managed to keep her social standing and financial holdings under two completely opposite political systems. The Schnier family fortune has remained intact largely due to Mrs. Schnier's sycophancy first towards National Socialists and then towards liberal democrats. Yet, because of this very behaviour, she lost her daughter, and her sons mourn her. The political and

financial gains won by Dr. Fuchs and Mrs. Schnier are, in the end, hollow victories.

V Conclusion.

No one wants to lower his standard of living. Indeed, those who do well in wartime want to continue to do so in peace-time. Those who have suffered hardship or persecution want to improve their economic standing. The austerity and fear imposed especially upon the middle and lower classes during a war makes the lure of peace-time stability and prosperity breath-taking. What more obvious time for German-speaking authors to note the mood of their society being tainted with opportunism than during and after the Second World War?

Here, Germany presents herself as a microcosm in which these authors reveal opportunism as a basic ingredient in society. Disagreeing with the government meant persecution or death in Nazi Germany. Even high-ranking Party members feared to put a foot wrong. The average citizen, then, had even less political and economic freedom. Opportunism was inevitable.

The primary reason why Germans became opportunistic in the first post-war years after the Second World War was their utter psychological, emotional, physical, moral, and ideological exhaustion. During the years of National Socialism, the Third Reich, and Hitler, people had been subjected to ideological indoctrination to an incredible extent. Furthermore, the people had endured six years of war, during which they had suffered great loss of life and tremendous destruction of land and property.

Too much had been demanded of the Germans and they were, therefore, unable to cope with their most recent past and digest

it. No "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" was possible because of the people's total exhaustion. The German people needed time to heal.

Immediately following the war, the economic situation for Germany, a defeated nation, was bleak. Starvation was not uncommon. Politically, no one dared admit involvement with the Nazi regime and all hailed the arrival of democracy for fear of reprisal. Germans were now taught that democracy and capitalism were highly laudable concepts. With Adenauer leading the government, "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" was not fostered. The German people were encouraged not to worry about politics, or their recent historical, political past, but rather to concentrate their efforts on industry, trade, and commerce in order to rebuild the fledgeling nation's economic base. Again, the seeds for opportunism were abundant.

With the rapid economic reconstruction and development in Germany with the "Economic Miracle" and a comfortable political climate, the opportunity to develop one's potential on either the political or economic scene was available. Not since the rise of Hitler could the average individual rise in social rank as easily as at this time. Those who had previously enjoyed wealth and standing were keen to recoup or at least maintain earlier economic privileges. Here, too, an observer could sense a breeding ground for opportunism. The Güllener in Der Besuch der alten Dame illustrate most clearly how opportunism became a force in the drive to rebuild the nation. It is a basic ingredient in the conflict of their morality; in time opportunism became a force to which the

Güllener succumbed in order to promote the welfare of their town. Correspondingly, as Germany enjoys her status as an economic power in the world, global and domestic recessions can quickly create havoc for her economy. Thus opportunism is sure to continue.

The attitude which the authors in this study describe is the prevalent tendency to concern oneself only with oneself and one's best interests. These authors see opportunism as an inevitable result of historical evolution. Walser shows Anselm Kristlein using mimicry as an evolutionary permutation which enables one specific member of the species to avoid destruction in the post-1945 consumer oriented society. The individual is not inclined to sacrifice himself for a greater good; the drive for self-preservation is paramount.

All the opportunists discussed in this study use opportunism as their main tool for survival in a brutal world where professing the wrong beliefs can cost not only one's livelihood, but indeed one's very existence. Each character might seek to defend his actions by this argument.

The authors, however, feel differently. Even Brecht, who makes Schweyk an amiable protagonist, does not extol opportunism but accepts it as a means to prolong one's survival: a necessary evil. The other authors are harsher in their evaluation of opportunism. All of the opportunists are at the very least problematic. Some incur ill-favour or even illness as a result of their pliable, or non-existent principles (Gallus Kristlein, Dr. Fuchs, Anselm Kristlein). Some are clearly mocked by the author

(the Güllener, Diego, the Boss, Herbert Kalick, Doc). Others still are destroyed completely (Ann, Anastasia, Matzerath, Meyn).

Each author whose characters have appeared in this thesis, Brecht, Dürrenmatt, Böll, Grass, and Walser, has isolated German individuals, or, in the case of Dürrenmatt, allegorical characters, whom the reader can understand and recognize. Thus the author satirizes a factor in his society, in this case opportunism. Each writer, whether he sees opportunism as primitive, unavoidable, or as simply deplorable makes the point that while opportunism is not unique to Germany, the historical events of this past century have engendered a continuous brood of opportunists in that society. Whether an author like Walser would admit to consciously expounding this notion is irrelevant, because an underlying disdain for opportunism is obvious in his work.

If one traces the attitudes of the authors included here in their examination of opportunists from 1945 to the most recent work, Der Mitmacher (1976), one sees that the individual's need for acceptance within society will drive him to acts of hypocracy and pragmatism. As society evolves and the individual becomes less important, the individual will attempt to conform at all cost in order to assuage his fundamental insecurity. As competition for acceptance in society becomes more intense, so must the individual's methods for integration become more extreme. Opportunism is embraced by the person as a way of adapting himself to a society which is in constant flux. Thus, to the reader's mind, society, not opportunism, is the evil culprit. Anselm Kristlein,

Matzerath, and Doc are the most extreme examples of the opportunist as a victim within a faceless society. Even those who do assume an identity, establish fixed principles, and reject opportunism, e.g. Alissa Kristlein, suffer as much as those who ignore their personal responsibility as functioning members of society. Nevertheless, it is the individual who perpetuates the sins of society by abdicating this responsibility.

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